

Learning and Teaching Policy



Reviewed/Updated	Date
Updated	March 2026
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<u>Signed:</u>	<u>Signed:</u>
Chair of Board of Governors	Principal

Rationale

Learning is at the centre of everything we do at Crawfordsburn Primary School. Whether it be through formal lessons, opportunities through play, or through our incidental interactions with our pupils, we recognise that, at all times, they are learning from us. Our school places a high value on the learning experiences of our pupils and staff and we actively promote learning in an environment that is challenging and relevant. We have high and realistic expectations of our pupils and seek to enable them to fulfil their potential.

This policy sets out what we view as the fundamentals of learning and teaching in our school and, as such, it serves as reference point for what constitutes effective learning and teaching. Curriculum subjects may have their own policies and planners, but this document will provide a background to common approaches adopted throughout the school.

Vision and Values

At Crawfordsburn Primary School we strive to create learners who are caring, creative and confident. We believe in the importance of learning to care for others, ourselves and the world around us. When we feel cared for, we feel safe and ready to take risks in our learning and are more prepared to creatively approach subjects across the curriculum. Through celebrating success and providing opportunities to be actively involved in school life, we develop our children's confidence and prepare them to positively contribute to the world they live in as caring, creative and confident individuals.

Caring

We have a strong family ethos. We care deeply about all members of our school and local community. Children are taught to care for themselves, others and the world around them in a friendly, nurturing and encouraging environment.

Creative

We celebrate and develop creativity within our school on a daily basis. Children are encouraged to be independent problem-solvers, and we actively promote the development of creativity through all areas of the curriculum. We recognise, reward and celebrate the achievements of pupils, from both inside and outside the classroom.

Confident

Through feeling and celebrating success in learning, our children develop their confidence and self-esteem. We provide relevant, forward-looking learning opportunities and encourage our pupils to be actively involved in school life through many roles that enable them to share their voice. Our pupils are encouraged to have high aspirations and are given opportunities to develop skills that they will carry with them into later life.

Aims

It is our aim that our values are lived out by everyone within our school community. This policy seeks to confirm existing good practice, while also encouraging staff to identify and reflect on the nature and process of learning.

Crawfordsburn Primary School aims to promote learning which:

- Reflects the vision of the school;
- Recognises that children learn in different ways;
- Sets high and realistic expectations for all;
- Actively engages learners and promotes self-confidence and self-esteem;
- Develops commitment, responsibility and independence in our learners;
- Promotes creativity, flexibility and innovation;
- Raises attainment and achievement; and,
- Provides opportunities to celebrate success.

For pupils:

- Reflects the vision of the school;
- Recognises that children learn in different ways;
- Meets children's educational and pastoral needs;
- Is enjoyable and relevant;
- Is motivating and challenging;
- Helps develop skills and independence in a variety of subject areas;
- Raises standards achieved; and,
- Provides opportunities to celebrate achievement.

For staff:

- Reflects the vision of the school;
- Develops a culture of professional development;
- Is supported by careful planning;
- Is appropriately resourced;
- Takes account of examples of good practice and research; and,
- Improves the standards of education provided by the school.

For parents and the wider community:

- Reflects the vision of the school;
- Recognises and supports the roles of parents and carers in children's education;
- Is accountable;
- Is valued by the whole school community; and,
- Promotes learning among the wider school community.

Effective Planning

We believe that effective learning happens because of effective planning. As such, teachers commit to produce plans that;

- Are based on the Northern Ireland Curriculum and the Lines of Progression documents provided by subject coordinators;
- Are reflective of the policies and vision of the school;
- Are based on detailed medium-term planners that are in place for each area of learning. The curriculum is delivered through a topic theme approach where subject planners are linked on a cross curricular basis. These planners are reviewed at the end of each cycle;
- Are working documents. They are used to reflect the responses of the children to lessons, allowing teachers to identify, and plan for, any required reinforcement or extension (using formative assessment to inform and direct the planning process);
- Are inclusive of cross-curricular themes, including thinking skills and personal capabilities;
- Are flexible enough to account for input from pupils (pupil voice);
- Are saved on the central staff drive where they are accessible to substitute teachers and coordinators;
- Are submitted to SLT/Subject Coordinators in line with the school's Monitoring and Evaluation Schedule;
- Clearly indicate where differentiation is required to ensure that all learners experience appropriate success;
- Clearly indicate the resources to be used;
- Are shared with all adults in the class.

Effective Teaching Approaches

When teachers make use of a wide range of teaching methods, balancing whole class, group and individual activities, children are engaged in effective learning.

In the Foundation Stage our children experience much of their learning through well planned and challenging indoor and outdoor Play-Based Learning. This self-initiated play helps children to understand and learn about themselves and their surroundings.

We ensure pupils are motivated by providing opportunities for them to make choices and decisions about their learning and use their ideas and interests as starting points for learning activities or for pursuing a topic in more depth.

We believe that teachers and classroom assistants are effective when;

- They feel supported in their working environment;
- They are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their teaching;
- They establish appropriate relationships with children;
- When interactions between children and adults are of a high quality;

- They use formative and summative assessment to understand what individual children need to learn next;
- They provide opportunities for peer/self-assessment;
- They encourage creativity and problem solving;
- Their planning and resources are well organised;
- They set clear, realistically high expectations for children that include learning objectives and success criteria where appropriate;
- Use questions effectively to aid children’s learning and to check for understanding;
- Their lessons have effective, interesting introductions;
- They model learning for the children they are working with;
- They check for understanding throughout the lessons, ensuring dynamic assessment and feedback are used to support learning and identify those who may require further support;
- They provide positive feedback on achievements and behaviour;
- They summarise learning for children in an effective plenary at the end of a lesson.

Effective Learning Environments

Our first responsibility is to ensure the physical and emotional environments in our classrooms are conducive to learning. As such, we strive to create an environment that is;

- Caring, supportive, inclusive and encouraging.
- Child-centred and fun;
- Welcoming, calm and friendly;
- Characterised by clear boundaries and expectations;
- Based on routine and structure;
- Informed by our learners’ need and interests (with displays celebrating the current classwork of pupils);
- Physically safe, stimulating, well-resourced and well-organised.

Effective Learning Experiences

We believe that children learn best when;

- They feel cared for and able to take risks;
- They are engaged and responsive;
- They are learning in a style that suits them and allows for a variety of approaches to learning;
- Their learning is linked to their interests, their prior learning and built upon their existing understanding;
- They understand what it is they are learning and what a successful outcome looks like;
- They are provided with an appropriate level of challenge and tasks are suitably differentiated;
- They have the opportunity to learn through multiple approaches (for example, whole class, small group, pair work, individual etc);
- Their learning is related to the “real world”;
- They feel they can take risks and learn from their mistakes;
- They are reflective and can self-assess;

- Their successes are celebrated;
- They are encouraged to be creative;
- Technology is used to support learning when appropriate;
- The outdoor environment is used to support learning when appropriate.

Effective Assessment

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and teaching process – it is at the heart of learning and teaching – and leads to continuous improvement. Assessment is used to measure progress, identify next steps in learning and meet children’s needs. It also helps with staff self-evaluation by identifying aspects of practice which needs further improvement.

To make assessment effective, we:

- Highlight and emphasise real progress and achievement rather than failure;
- Highlight and emphasise progress against previous personal bests, avoiding comparisons with others, and carefully handling peer comparisons;
- Are aware of the effect that comments and marks can have on learners’ confidence and self-esteem;
- Are clear with children about what they are being asked to learn and how they will know they have been successful;
- Help children become more aware of how, as well as what they are learning;
- Help children to reflect on their strengths and limitations; and
- Give children guidance on how to improve and provide opportunities to do so.

Formative Assessment strategies include:

- Sharing learning objectives and success criteria with children;
- Effective questioning and discussion;
- Self-assessment and peer-assessment.
- Observation and assessment in the Foundation Stage.

Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies are used throughout the school to link assessment to better learning and teaching. These include:

- Sharing Learning Intentions (WALT)
- Setting Success Criteria (WILF)
- Peer-Assessment
- Self-Assessment
- Constructive Feedback

Summative assessment methods are used to review and revise the provision in place within school and are used to formally record pupil progress. This takes the form of:

- Diagnostic Tests/Screeners;
- Standardised Testing (PTE, PTM, CAT4, GL Spelling and Star Reader);
- Teacher made tests; and
- Annual Reports.

Home Support

We recognise the importance of home support in learning and teaching by;

- Holding Parent Information Sessions at the beginning of the year to explain the plans for the year ahead;
- Sharing an overview of expected learning with parents at the beginning of each half term;
- By maintaining good contact with parents through Seesaw and other communication channels (see Communication Policy);
- By setting homeworks that reinforce learning;
- By conducting two Parent/Teacher Meetings a year;
- By producing an end of year school report.

Support for Children

We recognise the importance of supporting the individual needs of the pupils within our school. For some children, this will involve providing learning support through interventions within school and/or through partnerships with external agencies. In the process of supporting our pupils, staff will:

- Collaborate with each other re: strategies for supporting pupils;
- Liaise with parents and other agencies when needed;
- Liaise with the SENCo re: strategies for supporting pupils;
- Liaise with SLT;
- Liaise with multi-agency teams (as appropriate);
- Work in partnership with a child's classroom assistant where appropriate;
- Maintain Individual Education Plans where appropriate.

Monitoring and Evaluating

It is the responsibility of all teaching staff to be part of the process of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of learning and teaching. This is done in a collegial spirit by examining the following sources;

- Medium term planners;
- Children's work;
- Classroom observations;
- PRSD / Induction / EPD.

We facilitate both peer and group approaches to the monitoring and encourage teachers to be a professional support to one another.

Staff Development

Effective learning and teaching requires effective staff development. We strive to support teachers and support staff in enhancing their skills through the delivery of professional development and where possible, we support staff in the completion of additional training. Staff development opportunities will often be linked to School Development Planning or be identified through consultation with staff. Subject coordinators will also provide staff with useful resources and offer guidance and support.

Staff Induction in the Learning and Teaching Policy

Each new member of classroom-based staff will be given a copy of this policy and are encouraged to ask questions or seek clarification from the Principal if required.