



Gaer Primary School

Learning and Teaching Policy

Introduction

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for learning and teaching at Gaer Primary School. It was developed in the Autumn Term of 2014 through a process of consultation with staff and governors. It will be reviewed in January 2016.

At Gaer Primary School we believe that we are all lifelong learners – pupils and adults alike. 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.

Equalities

Every child, regardless of race, creed, gender or disability will have access to the curriculum at a level appropriate to their individual needs, in order that every child may experience success and satisfaction through their participation in learning.

Aims and Objectives

We believe that people learn best in different ways. At our school we provide a rich and varied learning environment which promotes high levels of pupil involvement in order for our pupils to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- Provide rich, meaningful, age appropriate learning experiences which support and challenge learners;
- Enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners;
- Develop learning skills and provide opportunities to practise and refine them;

- Differentiate effectively to meet the learning needs of individuals through the use of resources, support, time and task;
- Embrace new technologies and local and national initiatives;
- Foster children's confidence and self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people;
- Collaborate with others to develop a rich learning community
- 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.

Resources

We have invested heavily in resources to support teaching and learning, ensuring all pupils have access to:-

- individual wipe boards for mental warm ups, jottings, shared writing etc.
- Class easel boards for the teaching of the whole class or groups
- Ceiling mounted projectors, connected to SMART boards for interactive audio, visual and kinaesthetic classroom learning.
- Wireless internet connection in all classes
- Timetabled use of our computer suite at KS2.
- Suitable classroom furniture – age appropriate – for group learning
- I pads/Learn pads/Think pads at appropriate phases
- Resources to support outdoor learning at both the Foundation Phase and KS2
- Indoor resources to facilitate the Foundation Phase

In addition to this all teachers have laptops to support their planning, preparation, teaching and assessment that they are able to use at school. Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) rooms are available with internet /STEP access for staff to have a quiet place in which to work during non-contact time.

Prerequisites to Learning

Gaer Primary School is committed to developing pupil confidence, self esteem and well being. This extends both within and beyond the curriculum and includes Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) which are integral to school life and where children from a young age are taught to identify and manage their emotions.

Effective Learning

In line with the Learning to Learn agenda, we acknowledge that people learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them. Lessons cater for a range of learning styles –

audio, visual, kinaesthetic – and staff are aware that most learners draw from a combination of styles.

As a school we are committed to the ‘Learning to Learn’ agenda – where pupils become effective learners. Thinking skills are developed across the curriculum.

We offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. These include:

- talk groups
- investigation and problem solving;
- research and finding out;
- group work; collaborative and co-operative;
- pair work;
- independent work;
- whole class work;
- asking and answering questions;
- use of the computer and other IT sources;
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- creative activities;
- watching television and responding to musical or tape-recorded material;
- debates, role-playing and oral presentations;
- designing and making things;
- participation in athletic or physical activity

As part of the ‘Learning to Learn’ and ‘Thinking’ agenda the school uses a range of other learning initiatives to promote excellent standards across the school. There are opportunities to work with pupils of ‘like’ ability and in mixed ability groups within classroom seating arrangements.

We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in:-

- initiating learning through project mind maps;
- improving learning through self editing and peer marking;
- reviewing and reflecting the way they learn through mid and end of project evaluations and regular reviewing of individual targets

Effective Teaching

When teaching we focus on motivating the children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We use the LNF, Foundation Phase documentation and Curriculum 2008 to plan range and skills in order to guide our teaching.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children’s level of attainment. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of the children. With Reception pupils experiential learning is high focus – focus tasks along with

continuous and enhanced provision with 1:8 ratios and easily accessible, stimulating resources ensure active engagement. In Year 1 from 2010 a 1:15 ratio and in Year 2 from 2011 a 1:15 ratio. We strive to ensure that all tasks set, are appropriate to each child's level of ability. When planning work for children with Additional Educational Needs, including those who are gifted and talented, we give due regard to information and targets contained in the children's Individual Educational Plans (IEP's). We have high expectations of all children, and we believe that their learning here at Gaer Primary School is of the highest possible standard.

We set on-going academic targets for pupils throughout the year. We share these targets with children and their parents. The progress of each child in relation to their targets is monitored constantly and revised targets are set. In addition to this we set targets for end of Key Stage attainment in the Autumn term. This target setting process involves all teaching staff, the Head Teacher, Chair of Governors and Link Advisor. National Test Data, Alfie data, PM Benchmark data and teacher assessment findings and current attainment is taken into account along with historic progress within this setting. Realistic and Challenging targets are set.

We plan our lessons with clear learning objectives. We take these objectives from the Curriculum for Wales Document, LNF, Foundation Phase Document, Curriculum 2008 and TAPAS Document. Our weekly/bi-weekly plans contain information about the tasks to be set, the resources needed and the way we assess the children's learning. We evaluate all lessons so that we can modify and improve our teaching in the future. Tasks are differentiated effectively

We aim to take every opportunity for children to use and develop key skills in meaningful contexts and key skills are planned to be part of all our work. The National Literacy Framework (NLF) and The National Numeracy Framework (NNF) are used to develop key skills in numeracy and literacy across the curriculum.

Citizenship is highly valued at Gaer Primary School. We have an active School Council and Eco-Committee that take regular assemblies and lead us in sustainable development and global citizenship. Our school believes in the family ethos – home family, school family, community family and wider world.

Each of our teachers makes a special effort to establish good working relationships with all children in the class. All our teachers follow the school policy of assertive discipline with regard to discipline and classroom management. As a school we have 'Golden Rules' designed to keep us all both safe and happy. Children are 'Rewarded' for following these rules, but there are 'Consequences' if a rule is broken. In addition we set and agree with children the class code of conduct. We expect all children to comply with these rules that we jointly devise to promote the best learning opportunities for all.

We ensure that all tasks and activities that the children do are safe. When we plan to take children out of school, we first inform parents and obtain their permission. Risk Assessments are always completed for off site visits.

We deploy Teaching Assistants and other adult helpers as effectively as possible. Sometimes they work with individual children and sometimes they work with small groups.

Our classrooms are attractive learning environments. The classroom reflects the projects studied by the children and displays may be informative, enquiring or a celebration of pupils' learning. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display their best learning at some time during the year. All classrooms have a range of dictionaries, thesauruses and reading material as well as displays relating to literacy and Welsh. We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning, and an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources and high-quality learning by the children.

All our teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs accordingly. We do all we can to support our teachers in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice.

We conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all – staff modelling these qualities to pupils at all times.

Learning at Gaer Primary embraces a project based approach to learning, in line with the new Foundation Phase skills documents, the Statutory National Curriculum 2008 Documents.

LA Guidance states that thematic/Project Planning should:

- make genuine links between areas of the curriculum
- be linked to children's experiences and surroundings
- include student voice – what would the children like to learn about this theme?
- incorporate a balance of subject knowledge, skills and application
- be personalised to groups and individuals
- use AfL and L2L implicitly in teaching and learning
- inspire learners to go on learning – linked to home learning
- include themed days/weeks to revisit learning & apply skills
- draw on the current schemes of work as appropriate to support teachers

Thematic/Project Planning Rationale:

- Themes or Projects will be skills-based. Teachers will select appropriate skills from the Skills Progression Documents to form their Medium Term Planning.

- The themes will enable skills acquired in English and mathematics and other areas eg ICT, to be applied in meaningful contexts. Therefore, when planning for literacy and mathematics teachers should consider the most appropriate time to teach these skills. Teachers should use relevant subject documents, for example the Year Group numeracy planner to align the mathematical topics to the skills necessary for application in the themes being developed. In best practice the skills should be developed as close to the point of application as possible. This should serve as an effective means of motivating pupils. There will of course be areas of English and mathematics that will be developed outside of the themes.
- Where several curriculum subjects can be genuinely linked, a main theme/project can be planned using the Project/Thematic Overview Planning sheet.
- Curriculum subjects that do not link to the main theme/project may form mini themes/projects or may be taught discretely, as appropriate. Discrete areas of learning may be organised in blocks or separate areas of the curriculum.
- Aspects of the curriculum such as: ESDGC, CC, PSE, opportunities to promote equalities and use the outdoor environment can also be identified in the Theme/Planning Overview.
- Medium Term Planning must incorporate student voice ideas – harvesting the attitudes, values skills, knowledge and understanding that the children would like to learn about the theme/project. Learners should be immersed in experiences linked to the main theme, e.g. a project day, launch event, a visitor to school; enabling them to formulate appropriate questions.
- Existing schemes of work are a useful resource to support the planning process but they do not need to be re-written. The Project/Thematic planning, alongside short term fortnightly planning, will form new schemes of work.

The Role of the Head teacher and Governors

Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on teaching and learning. In particular they:

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating the resources effectively;
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning;
- monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations;
- monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment;
- ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching;
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning policies through the school self-review processes.

The Role of Parents

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- holding curriculum evenings to explain our school strategies for teaching and learning
- holding parents' evenings twice yearly to focus on individual pupil progress
- holding "Meet the Teacher" sessions at the start of the school year in order to share with parents routines and organisations;
- outline the topics that the children will be studying at regular intervals on the school website
- sending reports to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can improve further;
- explaining to parents how they can support their children with home learning.

We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We would like parents to:

- ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible;
- ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit (all labelled).
- do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour at school;
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general;
- fulfil the requirements set out in the home/school agreement.

Monitoring and review

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

Mr A. Smith

November 2014