

Kinellar School



LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

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1) Rationale and Aims

The aim of this policy is to provide guidance to all staff regarding a universal, coherent approach to learning and teaching throughout all the stages of the school. The onus is on the teaching staff to ensure the advice is applied and adhered to in their class.

“Our aspiration for all young children and every young person is that they should be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society and at work.” A Curriculum for Excellence, Scottish Executive, November 2004.

At Kinellar we believe that the individual child is at the centre of the learning process:

Children learn through *all* of their experiences. *What* we teach at Kinellar, and *how*, recognises and complements this.

Learning and teaching at Kinellar are undertaken in the light of the Scottish Executive’s National Priorities and reflect the importance of current initiatives in education. Our responsibility as educators is to prepare our young people for the future with the

skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

As a staff, we aim to provide an education which promotes:

- The development of knowledge, understanding, positive attitude and, above all, enjoyment in the process of learning
- Continuity and progression, including opportunities to consolidate and build upon prior learning
- Pace and challenge through having high, but realistic, expectations (see ‘*Some Thoughts on Pushing Pace and Challenge*’ guidance in blue ‘Learning and Teaching’ file in every classroom)
- Achievement of potential, taking account of the needs of the whole child and equality of opportunity for all
- A broad, balanced, real and relevant curriculum in line with national guidance which is sufficiently flexible to meet needs of the children
- Use of cross-curricular links to make learning meaningful and opportunities for in-depth learning particularly in the middle and upper primary stages
- Use of homework to consolidate learning and to keep parents aware of what is being learned
- Promotion of personal and social development as well as academic achievements

We monitor the quality of the learning and teaching at Kinellar School through reference to quality indicators outlined in 'How Good is Our School 2002?' and 'The Child at the Centre'. We also pay reference to the ten core components of 'GIRFEC'.

2) Planning

At Kinellar, we are continually reviewing and developing our planning processes. Planning is structured in the following ways:

Long term planning

Programmes of work are in place in some curriculum areas and under construction in others. These provide a foundation for teachers to use as a tool, but appropriate adaptations are made by teachers to meet the needs of individuals and groups of children and to include relevant activities to enhance the learning experiences of the children in their class.

Yearly overviews give an indication of curriculum coverage within a class.

Medium term planning

Subject planners give an indication of curriculum coverage within a class.

Short term planning

Teachers currently use a combination of daily and weekly plans which include:

- The learning intention for each lesson
- The activities which will take place including, *if relevant*: differentiation; resources; key vocabulary or questions to be shared and plenary
- Next steps and notes which inform future planning.

Whilst careful planning is important, staff at Kinellar recognise the importance of flexibility to allow for spontaneity, running with pupils' interests and/or altering plans according to need.

Guidance exists for planning folders to advise teachers about information to be included in class planning folders.

3) Learning and Teaching Styles

All individuals learn in different ways, and teachers have a number of different teaching styles. This adds to the uniqueness of each class and learning experience for the children who need to be equipped with social skills for dealing with the variety of personalities they will encounter during their lives.

At Kinellar the teaching and non-teaching staff make an effort to ensure that:

- Visual, aural and kinaesthetic learning styles are given due consideration when planning and undertaking activities with children

- All learners use as many senses as possible to absorb, process and recall information in all curriculum areas
- Learning is an active process for children
- Activities are taught in ways which suits both intuitive and sensory learners and which also suit children who prefer thinking or feeling. Further guidance on this can be found in the blue learning and teaching file
- There is a suitable balance of class, group and individual teaching based on the needs of the children in their classes
- There are opportunities for collaborative work, promoting the key skills of listening and talking and having respect for the opinions of others
- Thinking skills and problem solving are taught across *all* curriculum areas
- Children develop independent learning skills and are beginning to be involved in setting their own targets and self-evaluation
- They model processes for pupils when appropriate
- A range of open and closed questioning is used, allowing thinking time for children to respond
- Age-appropriate methods are used, for example, learning through play is the main emphasis in Nursery and Infant stages
- Pupils are kept focused, e.g.:
 - The classroom environment
 - Varying learning environments eg outdoor learning, external visits, use of other school and community facilities
 - Taking brain breaks
 - Physical involvement or exercise
 - Making learning as interactive as possible
 - Encouraging pupils to drink plenty of water
 - Paying attention to classroom behaviour management needs (see Behaviour Policy).

4) Marking and Feedback

How children's work is received and marked and the nature of feedback given to them will have a direct bearing on learning attitudes and future achievements.

Reasons for marking and feedback

- To recognise, encourage and reward pupils' efforts and achievement, and celebrate success
- To provide a dialogue between staff and pupils about strengths and areas for improvement in their work
- To improve children's confidence in reviewing their own work and setting future targets, by indicating 'next steps' in learning
- To indicate how a piece of work could be improved against agreed assessment criteria
- To help pupils develop an awareness of what they need to improve in order to reach the next level in the 3-18 curriculum
- To identify pupils who need additional support or more challenging work
- To inform curriculum planning.

Whole school approach

- 1) Pupils are made aware of the learning intention of each lesson.
- 2) Teachers have the freedom to choose how to display their learning intentions and timing of introduction into the activity
- 3) Pupils' work is marked in such a way that achievement is acknowledged and teaching points, if necessary, are highlighted
- 4) Marking or feedback is linked directly to learning intentions
- 5) Wherever possible marking takes place with the children. It must offer guidance as to whether the learning intention has been met and suggests the next steps pupils might take in their learning
- 6) Oral feedback can be giving reassurance or a quick check on progress. However it is most powerful and effective when pointing out successes and improvement needs against learning intentions. **Immediate feedback is most effective, therefore it is most likely to be oral**
- 7) When marking is undertaken at a distance teachers must ensure:
 - Pupils can read and understand the written comments
 - Time is allowed afterwards for pupils to read and reflect on the marking. This could be an interactive questioning session
 - Time is allowed for some improvement on the work to be made before moving on to the next activity. This may be done orally and as part of a group or class
 - That an opportunity is made for pupils to transfer the improvement suggestions to another piece of work.
- 8) In writing sessions, care must be taken not to overload spelling corrections or grammar

corrections. The success criteria may refer to an aspect of grammar or spelling which has been taught previously in order to embed the learning and this should be the focus of feedback.

9) Shorthand marking is consistent across the school. Appendix 1 gives the agreed codes of practice used in the school.

10) Staff other than the class teacher should initial any work they have marked or for which they have provided feedback.

11) Where appropriate, staff should mark work as a whole class or group activity, e.g. in maths whereby pupils mark their own work whilst supervised by an adult.

12) Although external rewards such as stickers are sometimes relevant, regular use can encourage the pupils to focus on the reward rather than the achievement and therefore careful consideration and use of such incentives needs to be given.

13) Paired marking does enhance learning but each teacher must ensure pupils are trained to undertake this task.

5) Assessment

Assessment is an ongoing and integral part of all learning and teaching. Pupils are encouraged to engage with self and peer evaluation, and use the self-awareness that this engenders to set new targets for future learning. Although a range of professionals and supporters are encouraged to become involved with the assessment process, the class teacher maintains overall responsibility for class, group and individual attainment tracking. In order to facilitate this process in a meaningful and consistent manner, school and cross establishment moderation is essential. This will ensure progression is monitored and can then inform the direction of future developments.

Each child has a personal yellow assessment folder. Evidence of specific experiences and outcomes should be collated in this folder. Each piece of work should state the level that has been judged to have been achieved and the justification for it. Pupil scrapbooks should be used to display experiences which evidence the four capacities stated in '*A Curriculum for Excellence*'.

At designated points through a school session, the Senior Management Team will sample and review assessment folders and jotters as part of the Quality Assurance process.

Assessment is for Learning (AifL)

Schools must be places where everyone is learning. Kinellar School is a place where assessment is part of learning and teaching without dominating our school activities. This is a complex process and the staff are:

- Using formative assessment to support learning and in planning next steps in consultation with pupils and parents (Assessment FOR learning)

- Themselves and pupils being fully involved in identifying, reflecting on and evaluating their own learning (Assessment AS learning)
- Ensuring that summative assessments are based on sound procedures and a range of evidence to check on pupils' progress (Assessment OF learning)

6) Additional Support Needs

At present pupils with an identified need may have access to support from SfL teachers, Pupil Support Assistants, English as an Additional Language teacher, Traveller Support teacher and Pupil Support Worker as appropriate.

Staff use a range of observation and assessment to identify need and liaise with other staff and external agencies such as the Educational Psychology Service as appropriate.

Work is carefully matched to individual need and planning reflects this, through differentiation and use of appropriate resources.

Planning undertaken by teachers takes into account needs outlined in Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs).

Visiting Specialist Teachers (VSTs) provide teachers with non-class contact time (RCCT), but are also valued as experts who may give advice to promote good teaching. Teachers may wish to observe VSTs to promote their own expertise, in consultation with the Deputies or Head Teacher and the relevant VST.

Some classes may have pupils who are significantly above average in ability, who may be gifted, talented or able in specific areas. As with other children who have additional support needs, work is carefully planned for such pupils to ensure pace, rigour and challenge. Planning will show how differentiation will be used to meet the needs of these pupils with advice and support from additional staff or through using resources as appropriate. Guidance is available in the blue learning and teaching folders in each classroom.

The 'Additional Support for Learning' policy giving further advice and guidance should be referred to.

10) Partnership with Parents and the Wider Community

Kinellar School continues to develop partnership through open communication with parents and carers concerning aspects of what is taught and how, e.g. newsletters, open afternoons, parents' evenings, displays, homework letters, workshops, etc.

Parents are encouraged to assist their children with homework and are given advice through termly letters from each class.

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) disclosure checked volunteers are welcomed to assist with learning activities where interest and demand exists.

Opportunities are made whenever possible to link project and school work to activities and organisations within the local community.

11) Improving Learning and Teaching

Learning and teaching requires continuous work and commitment from school staff to refine, modify and improve activities and techniques. Every year all teaching staff:

- Undertake a minimum of 35 hours continuous professional development (CPD) on a pro-rata basis
- Meet with the Depute or Head Teacher to discuss CPD work undertaken
- Take part in a broad audit of the school which includes a section on learning and teaching
- Participate in activities agreed through Collegiate Activity Time (CAT) to undertake whole school developments aimed at improving aspects of school including learning and teaching processes
- Self-evaluate an agreed focus of learning and teaching as part of their termly planning
- Participate in peer classroom observations to see each other in action
- Receive feedback about their practice through formal class visits from the Deputes or Head Teacher
- Provide and seek informal advice and support from other teachers to improve the quality of learning experiences for their children
- Ensure progression between classes, stages and establishments through effective transitional dialogue and documentation
- Develop their awareness and knowledge of new and current local and national initiatives aimed at improving learning and teaching in schools.

The Deputes and Head Teacher, through activities outlined in the Quality Assurance policy, ensure that further improvements in learning and teaching are a key part of their remit and responsibilities.

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