



Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy

RATIONALE

The purpose of our school policy on Learning, Teaching and Assessment is to promote a common understanding amongst all staff who are involved with learners of what constitutes highly effective practice which will support the vision that St. Patrick's has for our learners. The Learning, Teaching and Assessment policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Equalities and Inclusion Policies in order to ensure that all learning and teaching meets the needs of all learners, and that supporting information can be made available to parents in a way that meets their needs. Teachers should consider barriers to involvement arising from additional support needs, language, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and transsexual orientation. This will apply to social needs, as well as learning and teaching needs.

LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

- Learners are active participants who are fully engaged, resilient, highly motivated and interact well during lessons.
- Learners understand the purpose of their learning and lead the learning where appropriate (relevance and context of learning are present and clear).
- Learning is built on previous learning experience.
- Learning is challenging and well matched to the learners' needs and interests.
- Learners have choice and increasing responsibility for their learning.
- Digital technology is appropriately used to enrich, support and challenge learning.
- The language of learning provides and supports opportunities for learner dialogue.
- Learning from mistakes is recognised as vital for maximum development.
- Learners can apply their new learning in a range of unfamiliar contexts.
- A range of resources are used which are engaging and relevant for the learning experience.
- There is a positive, rich learning environment (classroom organisation, displays, accessibility to resources)

QUALITY OF TEACHING

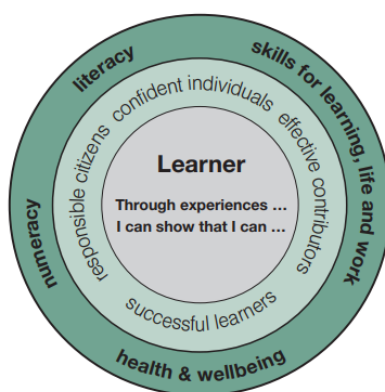
- A clear lesson structure is apparent, whilst providing opportunities for flexibility based on ongoing assessment of learning throughout the lesson.
- Learning Intentions and Success Criteria are co-created with learners and are effectively revisited throughout the lesson. These should build on prior learning.
- Explanations and instructions are clear to all learners.

- A range of effective questioning techniques are used by the teacher with appropriate response or thinking time given and opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills.
- A balance of whole class, group and independent learning is used to meet the needs of learners.
- Pace, challenge and support are effectively planned in every lesson (effective differentiation).
- Plenaries are used consistently to 'round off' learning.
- Resources are appropriately used – including digital technologies.
- Teachers are actively engaged with students throughout the learning process – teaching, assessing and intervening.
- Staff / partnership working and/or interventions are apparent and meaningful.
- Staff regularly link learning to the four contexts of learning, and their relevance to the world of work.

EFFECTIVE USE OF ASSESSMENT

The values that underpin Curriculum for Excellence must inform all aspects of assessment. These values are that the curriculum must be inclusive, must be a stimulus for personal achievement and must, through broadening of experience, be an encouragement towards informed and responsible citizenship. Assessment involves making judgements about children's and young people's learning. The important decisions that are made on the basis of these judgements have to be made using sound evidence and professional integrity. Assessment approaches have to avoid pre-conceptions and stereotypes and be fair to all involved: to children and young people, their families and communities.

(Building the Curriculum 5: A Framework for Assessment)



As outlined in 'Building the Curriculum 5' the purposes of assessment are:

- to support learning that develops the knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities which contribute to the four capacities

- to give assurance to learners, parents, and others, that children and young people are progressing in their learning and developing in line with expectations
- to provide a summary of what learners have achieved, including through qualifications and awards
- to contribute to planning the next stages of learning and to help learners progress to further education, higher education and employment
- to inform future improvements in learning and teaching

Within St. Patrick's, we have a robust and integrated approach to developing assessment and moderation approaches through cluster and school collaborations, Validated Self-evaluation activities, and through Quality Assurance and Moderation.

Assessment is an integral part of daily learning and teaching. Staff get to know their learners well, build up a profile of their progress, strengths and needs and involve them in planning what they need to learn next. Teachers frequently take stock of their learners' achievements and progress in order to be able to plan ahead and to record and report on progress. This is vital in ensuring that learners' progress is on track and that action is being taken to address any problems at the earliest possible point.

Assessment involves gathering, reflecting on and evaluating evidence of learning to enable staff to check on progress. Teachers use a range of assessment approaches to assess the different types of achievement across the curriculum. Forms of assessment within the school include:

Observation

- listening to pupils talking with one another;
- discussing with individuals, groups and the class;
- questioning pupils about their understanding of their work.

Written Responses

- various kinds of "short-answer" assessments;
- writing longer pieces;
- tasks drawn from the catalogue of national test units.

Practical Activities

- planning and carrying out experiments;
- co-operating in a project;
- evidence of knowledge or skills acquired or put into practice from various products such as pictures, music, a report of an investigation or experiment.

Self- and peer assessment can provide evidence: where possible, pupils should be encouraged to reflect on their own work and compare their performance against agreed criteria. It may sometimes be helpful to have pupils consider each others' work against these same criteria.

Formative Assessment

Formative Assessment strategies have been developed throughout the school and have proven to be of value in raising attainment and establishing independent and co-operative learning. These strategies and approaches should now be developed to incorporate all curricular areas where appropriate, particularly the use of feedback for pupils as a form of assessment.

RECORDING

There should be three types of record:

Evaluations

- a succinct account of identified teaching aims covered and the learning outcomes or strands they relate to;
- an indication of teaching methods used;
- an indication of how the class and groups have coped;
- evaluative comment on curriculum and methods.

Assessment of ongoing work

- class jotters
- question banks
- high quality contextualised assessments
- termly assessment

MODERATION

Within St. Patrick's, ongoing moderation activities within the school and learning community provide opportunities for staff to engage with other professionals in order to arrive at a shared understanding of standards and expectations for the broad general education. Teachers work together, drawing on guidance and exemplification and building on existing standards and expectations to:

- plan learning, teaching and assessment
- check that assessment tasks and activities provide learners with fair and valid opportunities to meet the standards and expectations before assessments are used
- sample evidence from learners' work and review teachers' judgements
- agree strengths in learners' performances and next steps in learning
- provide feedback on teachers' judgements to inform improvements in practices

Moderation helps to raise standards and expectations and levels of consistency across teachers and schools. This ensures that there is an appropriate focus on outcomes for learners, that learning is at the appropriate level and that learners develop the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work, including higher order thinking skills, which will allow them to be successful in the future. Teachers being involved in developing their assessment approaches through participation in moderation activities is a highly effective form of professional development.

PLANNING, TRACKING AND MONITORING

Within the school we plan appropriately through long and short term planning. This includes the use of termly Forward Plans and Daily Plans. Teachers make effective use of a range of evidence to plan next steps. Children are given opportunities to take on leadership roles and play an active role in the school.

Staff use evidence of learning from a broad range of contexts to track and monitor how a learner is progressing and that learning is secure. The evidence will be different depending

upon the kind of learning being assessed, the learning activity and learners' preferences about how to share what they have learned.

Evidence comes from day-to-day learning as well as from specific assessment tasks, activities, tests and examinations. Judgements about learners' progress need to be dependable. This means that assessments must be valid and reliable. Assessment approaches should be proportionate and fit for purpose: different forms of assessment are appropriate at different stages and in different areas of learning. It is important that an overview is taken across all learners' assessment experiences to ensure breadth, balance and coherence in approaches. It is also important that arrangements do not place excessive burdens on learners and teachers, which divert their time and effort from learning and teaching.

Teachers regularly update Tracking and Monitoring Spreadsheet and meet termly with SMT to discuss attainment and achievement for all learners. Regular consultation and discussion ensures that staff fully understand learners' needs in relation to their possible barriers to learning and those facing additional challenges. Staff and SMT have regular opportunities to analysis data in order to ensure continuous improvement.