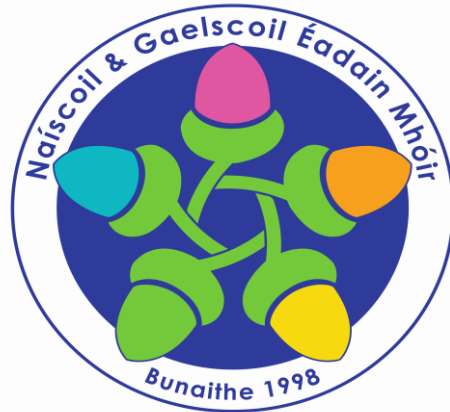


# Naiscoil & Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir



## Learning and Teaching Policy

Written: September 2024

Reviewed by parents: September 2024

Ratified by Board of Governors: Sept 2024

Review Date: September 2028

*“If pupils can't learn the way we teach, we must teach the way they learn”*

### **Introduction**

The staff in Naiscoil & Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir believe that teaching and learning is central to our mission and vision for our school. We believe that all children should access high quality teaching which enables them to reach their full potential.

Learning is the principle reason for our school's existence; it is at the heart of everything we do. It is an activity, which involves everyone. The key to successful pupil learning is effective teaching differentiated to meet the needs of all children. Effective teaching occurs when teachers understand and are able to apply the principles of the learning process to a range of children in a variety of situations. We believe that learning is part of growing and is essential to the development of the whole child.

### **AIMS**

We aim:

To encourage all pupils to become Irish speakers who play an integral part in the Irish speaking community in Derry now and in the future.

To provide opportunities for pupils to gain an awareness of, and to develop respect and understanding of other cultures.

To ensure that all pupils reach their full potential through the implementation of a broad and enriched curriculum which fully utilises all available resources.

To provide all pupils with the tools to become confident global citizens.

To create a safe, inclusive and encouraging learning environment where pupils, staff and parents feel valued and empowered and where talents and achievements are celebrated.

To provide continuous professional development opportunities for all staff.

Ár Ráiteas Misin / Our Mission Statement

Cothú, Cultúr, Cúram, Ceiliúradh

Ár bhFís Scoile / Our School vision

Sar-oidreachas i gcroílár an phobail

Our curriculum is skills based; enabling children to develop the skills they need to be effective, enthusiastic learners, applying skills and knowledge in a wide range of contexts. Lessons are planned around these steps, and we differentiate learning to match the needs of the children within our classes.

## THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We recognise the role of the school and home environment in promoting positive attitudes to and supporting learning. We aim to provide a learning environment that:

- promotes well-being and is secure and safe.
- Is rich in language and in number.
- Is well ordered and organised.
- Conveys high levels of expectation.
- Is consistent between classes.
- Promotes an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Promotes independence and appropriate ways of working.
- Is bright, colourful and stimulating to the senses whilst taking into account the need for quieter more peaceful spaces also.
- Has a variety of displays covering the breadth of the curriculum.
- Has displays which are interactive, record celebrations, set standards of presentation and celebrate children's work and interests.

## LEARNING AND THE LEARNER'S ROLE

Learners are most effective when they are involved in, and take responsibility for, their own learning. Learning, therefore, aims to increase levels of independence and develop the ability to work with sustained concentration for age-appropriate periods of time.

Effective learning strategies we aim to promote are:

- The ability to ask and answer questions in Irish and in English.
- Concentration when listening.
- Contributing to discussions in a relevant and thoughtful way.
- Co-operating and working collaboratively with peers and adults.
- Problem solving skills.
- Selecting appropriate resources for a task and putting them away.
- Organisational skills.
- Responding to and persevering with a task to a conclusion.

- Taking pride in the presentation of work.
- Presentational skills..
- Organising learning
- Responding and conforming to established routines and practices.
- Explaining their understanding.
- Appreciating and evaluating their own work and that of others.
- Setting personal targets.

## TEACHING AND THE TEACHER'S ROLE

We recognise that the organisation and effectiveness of teaching has a direct impact on the quality of the child's learning experience.

We aim to develop and refine our teaching by adopting a reflective approach to pedagogy, a pro-active approach to change and a responsibility for ensuring our own continued professional development and learning.

Within our work we aim to develop the following attributes:

- Have high and realistic expectations of ourselves and our pupils.
- Be well planned and organised.
- Be a role model by being punctual, dressing and speaking appropriately, showing respect for others.
- Be supportive of, and assist, colleagues by respecting individual differences and working collaboratively as part of a whole-staff team.

- o Have good curricular area knowledge.
- o Take a self-reflective approach to our work.
- o Seek to improve our skills and understanding through planned professional development.
- o Develop classroom systems and organisation to support learning.
- o Develop digital electronic skills.

We aim for our teaching to demonstrate;

- o Good quality planning based on the assessment of the children's prior knowledge and understanding.
- o Appropriate levels of resourcing.
- o Clear and shared Learning Intentions.
- o Concise and shared Success Criteria.
- o Appropriate use of grouping.
- o Differentiated and matched activities reflecting an understanding of pupils' ability and development levels..
- o A range of teaching styles and methods.
- o Effective use of additional adults within the classroom
- o Good pace with effective use of time.
- o Lesson organisation that involves children in their learning.
- o Developmental questioning using Blooms Taxonomy.
- o Challenge, encouraging risk taking and learning from mistakes.
- o Assessment which is formative across the lesson.
- o A range of learning mediums, e.g. digital, audio, written.

## PLANNING

The foundation for our curricular development is the School Development Plan; developed through a process of collaboration between staff, pupils, parents and approved by governors. We follow a cross curricular approach to learning where some subjects are taught through a topic and some are covered as discrete subjects. Meetings with colleagues are organised to discuss various aspects of the curriculum and ensure consistency of approach and standards. Planning takes place weekly, with reference to the NI Curriculum.

Monthly plans are available to the Principal and Co-ordinators. Plans are based upon teacher judgment, data, pupil need and subject expectation.

Learning is most effective when the person directing the learning ensures that systems, procedures, and expectations result in effective ways to:

- Meet the lesson objectives
- Meet the needs of all children
- Optimise the use of support staff
- Allow teachers to teach

Learning is most effective when the teacher directs the learning utilising a ranges of strategies to engage. To achieve this, teachers use a mixture of:

Whole Class Teaching to promote:

- Shared learning intention and success criteria
- Explanation and modelling
- Direct teaching and skilled questioning using Blooms Taxonomy
- Broadcasting expectation and engendering enthusiasm
- Focusing attention/concentration

Group Work to promote:

- Collaborative working practices
- Differentiated teaching
- Sharing and developing ideas
- Assessment opportunities

Individual Work to promote:

- Practice of skills
- Individual responses
- Reading
- Close observational work
- Working at own pace



## DIFFERENTIATION

So that we always have the highest possible expectations of individual learners and so pupils can demonstrate what they can do, understand, and achieve, teachers will differentiate the curriculum according to individual needs by:

- *pace*
- *content*
- *task*
- *relevance*
- *resources*
- *extension*
- *autonomy*
- *outcome*
- *teacher/adult support*

Differentiated tasks will be detailed in planning. Learning objectives will be specified for differentiated teaching and reference will be made in weekly plans to IEPS / Personal Learning Plans (PLP's) where appropriate.

## SEN PUPILS

Teachers provide a differentiated learning environment, which takes account of:

- Gender
- Gifted, talented, low and under achievers
- Pupils with special educational needs.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the pupils' levels of achievement. Our focus is to develop further, their knowledge and skills. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each pupil's level of ability. When planning work for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) we give due regard to information and targets contained within the pupils IEPs / PLPs. We have high expectations of all pupils and believe that all pupils should be included in the full range of educational opportunities. In line with the Code of Practice, the special needs of individual pupils are catered for through consultation with parents, pupils, SENCO, Coordinators, and other appropriate agencies and with reference to the Special Needs Policy. To ensure early intervention when needed, we monitor the progress of all pupils on a daily basis.

The following strategies are employed to support pupils with learning difficulties:

- early identification of learning difficulty
- differentiated programme
- setting attainable individual targets with IEP, where necessary
- regular meetings involving relevant personnel to monitor progress and make further plans
- effective use of classroom assistants
- close communication with parents
- raising self-esteem of the pupil by praising effort, celebrating success, and encouraging perseverance.
- use of assistive technology to overcome barriers to learning

We believe that gifted and talented pupils are those who achieve significantly higher than the average for their age. We acknowledge that high achievement may be academic, creative, sporting or expressive. Gifted pupils are challenged and encouraged to fulfil their potential in their area of strength. Their talents are celebrated by the whole school community.

The following strategies are employed to teach gifted and talented pupils:

- providing higher expectations
- differentiating work to include problem solving and investigations
- encouraging participation in extra-curricular activities
- increasing responsibility
- providing opportunities to use and share talents with others in the school community
- recognising achievement in Assemblies and through local media.
- providing opportunities to work independently e.g. research.

## RESOURCES

Teaching and learning are supported by a range of good quality resources, some communal and some classroom based, some will be subject specific, others general purpose. Resources within school should:

- Meet the needs of pupils and staff
- Be of good quality showing appreciation for best value
- Be appropriate to the task
- Be reviewed regularly for continued relevance

- Be labelled in appropriate storage
- Be varied to allow for differentiation and preference
- Be arranged and organised within the classroom to promote independence

Additionally, we consider the extensive grounds of the school and the outdoor play equipment as significant resources for the development of wellbeing, play and activity based learning and further exploration of the curriculum.

## ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

Planning and Assessment for learning is done through:

- Teachers' planners
- Teaching staff curriculum-based meetings
- Curriculum team meetings
- IEPs / PLPs
- Senior Management Team meetings
- Pupil Performance meetings
- Informal discussions amongst colleagues
- Discussions between teaching and support staff
- Teacher observations
- Formative and Summative Assessments

Regular assessments are made of pupils' work in order to establish the level of attainment and to inform future planning. These are monitored by coordinators once per term. Formative assessment is used to guide the progress of individual pupils. It involves identifying each child's progress across the curriculum and this is evaluated to determine what each child has learned and what therefore should be the next stage in his/her learning.

Children from Y4 to 7 complete annual summative assessments in English and Maths. R3 complete summative maths assessments. CAT 4 test in Y4 and 6 are used as baseline comparison.

Feedback to pupils about their own progress is achieved through discussion and the marking of work. Effective marking:

- helps children understand how to improve and comments aim to be positive and constructive
- is often done while a task is being carried out through discussion between child and teacher
- Correcting of written work is used sensitively and with discretion so that a child can assimilate a limited number of corrections at one time. This will vary according to the age, ability and task.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Learning and teaching is a shared responsibility and all members of the school community have an important part to play.

Teachers are encouraged to be reflective practitioners. Practice is discussed and shared informally but reflected-on more formally through evaluating weekly / monthly planners

- IEPs / PLP's are evaluated and amended termly in collaboration with the SENCO teacher and classroom assistant (if appropriate).
- Wall displays, book scoops and talking to pupils' form part of the evaluation process.
- Any teacher who identifies an issue or a developmental need may team-teach a lesson or observe a lesson being taught on request within our school or in another school where good practice has been identified.
- All staff are encouraged to pursue CPD and disseminate the information as appropriate during staff meetings, Key stage meetings or curriculum development meetings.
- Sharing Good Practice is facilitated throughout the year where teachers observe colleagues with specific skills or expertise or visit other settings if they choose to.

**Coordinators are responsible for:**

- taking the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in their subject throughout the school
- supporting colleagues in their development and implementation of the scheme of work, and in assessment and record-keeping activities
- monitoring progress in their subjects and advising on action needed, taking responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for their subjects

- using release time to support colleagues
- keeping professionally informed and upskilled through reading, attending relevant face-to-face and online professional learning opportunities and disseminating information/good practice to staff
- Preparing reports and evaluating action plans (when necessary) for their curricular area in line with the School Development Plan and reporting to the Principal and Governors.

### **The Principal and Senior Leaders monitor;**

- how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms 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 the School Development Plan.
- The PRSD process is carried out by the Principal and involves direct observation of teaching and learning.
- The Principal observes the practice of Beginning Teachers and /or Early Professional Development teachers.

### **The Role of Governors**

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

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful learning and teaching
- monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations
- monitor how effective learning and teaching 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 learning

and teaching policies through the school self-review processes. These include reports from coordinators and the termly Principal's report to governors as well as a review of the in-service training sessions attended by our staff.



## Parents' Role

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping their children to learn effectively. Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning by:

- ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, well-rested and in good health
- ensuring that their child arrives at school wearing the correct uniform and bringing necessary equipment
- providing support for the Behaviour Policy within the school and the teacher's role
- supporting the work of educational targets and becoming actively involved in the implementation of any support programme
- participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainment
- support the school's homework policy and give due importance to any homework set
- allowing their child to become increasingly independent as they progress throughout the school

We work hard to inform and assist parents in how they may support their children's learning at home. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress and of ways in which they may participate in their education through:

- School App
- Key School Policies- accessed on school website
- Curriculum Meetings
- Parental Workshops
- Visits from parents depending on themes
- Informative and helpful remarks when marking work
- Well-chosen homework activities
- Invitations to parents to attend open days, displays of work, pupil presentations, assemblies, celebrations, sports days, concerts etc.
- Pupils' work is showcased on the school Facebook page
- Annual written reports at end of year

- Annual Parent/Teacher Meetings
- Parents of pupils with Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) are invited each term to review progress made and to discuss the way forward

This policy also operated in line with other school policies and should be read in conjunction with the following:

Assessment Policy  
Pastoral Care Policy  
Marking Policy  
Homework Policy  
SEND Policy  
Literacy Policy  
Mathematics and Numeracy Policy  
Learning through Play Policy

This policy will be reviewed as and when necessary.