

COOKSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL



Learning and Teaching Policy

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Rationale

High quality learning and teaching is at the heart of child centred education.

Cookstown High School recognises the importance of effective learning and teaching in delivering our mission of providing and promoting excellence, opportunity and support to all our pupils.

The Education and Training Inspectorate detail the characteristics of effective practice in this area in the Inspection and Self Evaluation Framework (ISEF), 2017.

- *curriculum and departmental planning takes account of the NI curriculum (NIC), school policies and priorities outlined in the School Development Plan (SDP) and impacts positively on the pupils' learning experiences and the outcomes they attain;*
- *the long-term planning promotes clear progression from year to year;*
- *the medium-term planning meets the requirements of the NIC and subject specifications and includes: clear learning intentions; appropriate pedagogy to develop the pupils' wider skills, dispositions and capabilities; effective differentiation which addresses the needs of the range of ability within classes; and connected learning across and between areas of learning, including ICT, literacy and numeracy;*
- *the intended learning: builds upon the pupils' interests, needs and prior learning; is challenging; encourages commitment; builds confidence; creates high expectations; and develops deep conceptual learning;*
- *the teachers use a range of effective approaches that: provide open-ended activities and challenges; focus on explicit thinking; encourage children's questioning; enable collaborative learning; promote independent learning; and make meaningful connections beyond the classroom;*
- *the school assessment policy reflects statutory requirements and whole school understanding about the purpose of effective assessment, the methods to be used, the range and type of evidence to be retained, and the uses made of the assessment information; and*
- *the pupils receive, understand and apply appropriate verbal and written feedback from teachers on their progress in learning, including on their self-management and persistence; which leads to improvement.*

Aims

Cookstown High School seeks to provide an environment, both inside and beyond the classroom, in which pupils, staff and parents are committed to promoting and providing excellence opportunity and support.

- Pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum relevant to their needs, aspirations and ability.
- All pupils are provided with opportunities to access both an appropriate curriculum and a wide range of extracurricular activities.
- The development of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills is emphasised in each Key Stages and area of learning.
- Teachers and support staff share a commitment and enthusiasm which allows pupils to learn in a positive and individually challenging environment.
- Knowledge, skills and interests are developed using a wide range of strategies to reflect ability and diversity within the classroom
- Assessment forms an integral part of the learning and teaching process and is used both in an on-going way, Assessment for Learning, and summatively, Assessment of Learning, to inform teaching, develop learning, promote target setting and bring about sustained improvement
- All teachers engage in self-evaluation.
- Appropriate data is used to monitor performance, promote further improvement and engage each pupil in the outcomes of his/her learning.

Planning for Successful Learning

- Learning and teaching is guided by effective planning at whole school, departmental and individual levels in the delivery of the Revised Curriculum and the provision of a broad range of options for further study at Key Stage 4 and 5.
- The 3-year School Development Plan defines the priorities and aims of the school and provides a framework for coherent action planning to Curriculum Leaders and Coordinators.
- Action plans based on the school development plan are created annually by each department. These are reviewed during the year and evaluated in detail at the end of the year against the relevant success criteria. The outcomes of this process inform future planning.
- Curriculum Leaders ensure Schemes of Work are in place detailing specific learning and teaching provision within each subject area and key stage, ensuring progression from year to year. Planning meets the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and subject specifications detailing clear learning intentions, teaching strategies, the development of wider skills, dispositions and capabilities, differentiation for a range of abilities and links to other learning areas.
- Individual teachers carry out medium and short term planning which reflects the aims and intentions of the schemes of work and reflects the prior learning of the pupils, their needs, interests and ability levels.
- Planning for sustained self-improvement is a feature of regular meetings of the Senior Leadership Team, Curriculum Leaders and Curriculum Coordinators.
- Whole staff training provides opportunities for the sharing of good practice, self-reflection and planning for improvement. A range of training is provided each year using both external agencies and utilising in-house expertise. Further opportunities are provided to staff in the form of a voluntary internal 'CPD' programme. The PRSD scheme is also used to embed strategies detailed in the PRSD menu and provide further opportunities to share good practice.

- Consultation with outside educational bodies, including EA, CCEA and C2K informs planning.

Creating and maintaining a supportive learning environment

Cookstown High School seeks to ensure that effective learning is enhanced through:

- The provision of a safe, supportive and purposeful environment.
- A well-ordered school environment in which pupils treat each other and members of staff with respect, according to the school rules.
- High expectations of individual pupils commensurate with their ability level, ensuring each pupil is challenged.
- A well developed and caring pastoral structure exists providing appropriate support to pupils with a range of social, emotional, academic and personal needs.
- Special Educational Needs are identified, recognised and addressed in planning and classroom practice, utilising individual education plans and statements of need.
- Effective use of data in baselining and tracking academic progress, with strategies in place to identify address underachievement.
- The provision of effective Careers Education, Information and Guidance (CEAIG) across all Key Stages, providing opportunities to assist pupils make informed choices about career pathways.
- Use of an appropriate range of learning and teaching strategies and resources, including a range of technologies, which support, engage, motivate and reward all pupils in their work.
- Effective strategies to ensure the smooth transition from primary and between key stages, including the availability of curricular pathways which recognise the abilities and aspirations of the pupils.
- Collaboration with other schools, community groups and external agencies to provide a diverse range of learning experiences.

Characteristics of effective classroom practice

- Lessons are well planned, challenging and appropriately paced, recognising the range of abilities in the class.
- Learning intentions are clearly identified and relate to identified schemes of work.
- Teachers employ a range of strategies for pupil management which are in line with school rules, recognising and praising good behaviour and dealing appropriately with inappropriate behaviour.
- Teachers have high expectations in relation to pupils' uniform when entering the room and throughout the lesson.
- Teachers should convey and set realistically high expectations which challenge and inspire pupils.
- Teachers seek to take account of pupils' different learning styles and individual needs, as appropriate.
- Opportunities exist for pupils to work independently, in pairs, groups and collaboratively.
- Effective differentiation which addresses the needs of the range of abilities within the class is evident.
- Learning takes account of the interests and needs of the pupil and recognises prior learning.
- Teachers use a range of activities provide open ended activities and challenges.
- Incorporate a suitable range of assessment techniques which inform and guide subsequent lessons
- Opportunities to highlight links with other learning areas and beyond the classroom are provided and explored.
- Opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are provided and utilised when appropriate.

- Teachers should develop and maintain positive relationships with pupils, based on mutual respect.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop a range of wider skills, dispositions and capabilities.
- Effective use is made of support staff, including technicians and classroom assistants, to enhance the learning experiences of pupils.
- Set appropriate and regular homework in line with departmental and school policy, these should be linked to learning and be marked regularly.
- Monitoring and evaluating pupils' work through both Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning strategies

Assessment of and for learning

Cookstown High School's Assessment policy outlines the rationale and strategies used to assess pupil work.

Role and responsibilities

The Principal consults with the Vice Principal (Curriculum) and the Curriculum Committee of the Board of Governors on priorities set down for learning and teaching in the School Development Plan.

The Principal reports regularly to the full Board of Governors on the priorities for learning and teaching detailed in the School Development Plan.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum) reports regularly to the Senior Leadership Team on learning and teaching and seeks to work closely with the Vice Principal (Pastoral) and pastoral staff to ensure effective classroom practice and pupil support.

The Vice Principal with responsibility for the curriculum leads learning and teaching within School working closely with Curriculum Leaders and subject co-ordinators.

Curriculum Leaders and subject co-ordinators lead teaching and learning within their subject areas and areas of responsibility.

Teaching staff work closely with their non-teaching colleagues who provide technical support in the practical subjects and who act as classroom assistants for pupils with

a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

All members of staff seek to uphold the aims and values of Cookstown High School and, within that context, to promote high quality learning and teaching, in accordance with this policy.

Pupils are involved, through the School Council, and via regular meetings with the senior prefect team.

Parents are informed and involved through the curriculum booklets, information meetings and parent teacher consultation meetings. Their role in supporting their children in all aspects of their learning is highly valued. Parents contribute to learning and teaching through their participation in the PFTA, CEAIG activities and their active support for the extracurricular life of the school.

The Learning and Teaching Policy is kept under review by the Vice Principal (Curriculum) in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team and Curriculum Leaders.