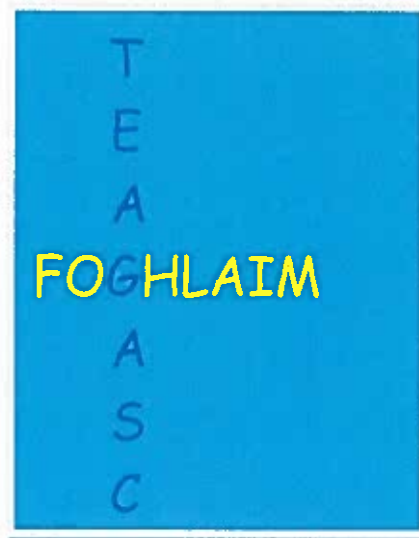


Bunscoil an Iúir

Ní neart go cur le chéile.



Polasaí Foghlama agus Teagaisc

Learning and Teaching Policy

Reviewed: April 2016

Ratified: 12/10/16

Intreoir / Introduction

In Bunscoil an Iúir, we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and children learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

Cuspóir an doiciméid seo / The purpose of this document

1. To state how learning and teaching should take place in Bunscoil an Iúir.
2. To aim for consistency by developing a shared understanding of the quality and type of learning and teaching expected in Bunscoil an Iúir.
3. To aid monitoring, observation and evaluation for a variety of purposes, including Threshold and PRSD.
4. To provide a framework for lesson planning, staff development and strategic planning in conjunction with the School Development Plan.
5. To support School values and an approach to inclusive education.

Aidhmeanna agus Spriocanna / Aims and objectives

In Bunscoil an Iúir, we believe that people learn best in different ways and we aim to provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows all children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential, irrespective of socio-economic background, ethnicity, gender or creed.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring, independent and reflective learners;
- foster children's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people;
- develop children's self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others;
- show respect for all cultures, religions and none 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;
- enable children to grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.
- take a pride in their work and the work of others.

Teagasc agus Foghlaim Éifeachtach / Effective teaching and learning

We acknowledge that people learn in many different ways and that personalised learning is at the heart of effective teaching and learning. In Bunscoil an Iúir, we recognise the need to develop strategies that will allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them so that they may fulfil their potential.

http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key_stages_1_and_2/altm-ks12.pdf

Many learning opportunities are made available to the children that take account of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles.

Such opportunities include:

- investigation and problem solving;
- research and finding out;
- group work;
- paired work;
- independent work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions;
- use of ICT;
- a range of experiences - fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- visitors
- creative activities;
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations;
- designing and making things;
- participation in athletic or physical activity
- outside classroom/environment

We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way they learn, and to reflect on how they learn - what helps them learn and what makes it difficult for them to learn. (AFL)

Effective teaching and learning is characterised by the nine features of Personalised Learning:

- High quality teaching and learning
- Target setting and tracking
- Focused assessment
- Intervention
- Pupil grouping
- The learning environment
- Curriculum organization
- The extended curriculum
- Supporting children's wider needs

1. 'Quality first' teaching and learning

This is characterised by:

- Highly focused lesson design with sharp objectives
- High expectations of pupil involvement and engagement with their learning
- High levels of interaction for all pupils
- Teacher questioning, modelling and explaining
- An emphasis on learning through dialogue, with regular opportunities for pupils to talk individually and in groups
- An expectation that pupils will accept responsibility for their own learning and work independently
- Praise and encouragement to motivate pupils further

2. Tagarmharcáil agus Rianú / Target setting and tracking

Individual pupils' progress is tracked, together with that of cohorts and specific groups throughout the school. We use a range of performance measures including teacher assessment (against NC and small step descriptors) and test results. Strengths and areas for development are identified to inform planning and to implement intervention programmes as appropriate. Data is collected on a regular basis and is shared with the staff and pupils.

- Pupil progress is managed through whole-school Classroom Monitor program.
- Pupil progress meetings are held termly to identify strengths/weaknesses in performance and/or identify CPD requirements.
- Pupil voice is central to target setting and the review of performance and target setting.

- Parents/carers receive regular updates on their child's progress so that they can provide support/encouragement as appropriate.
- The Principal and co-ordinators monitor pupil progress through regular lesson observations, pupil interviews, book and planning scrutiny.

3. Focused assessment

Secure knowledge of each pupil's current progress is a core element of teaching and learning in Bunscoil an Iúir. Lesson planning is based on prior learning and throughout the learning process, active assessment is required to ensure that the expected rate of progress is being made.

Fundamental to our formative assessment procedures is Assessment for Learning (AfL).

A range of AfL strategies are used in the classroom:-

- Learning objectives are made explicit and shared with the pupils.
- Success criteria are agreed by the pupils and teacher.
- Self and peer assessment is used against the success criteria.
- Pupils are engaged in their learning and receive immediate feedback on their progress.
- Summative assessment opportunities are detailed in the assessment calendar. These include optional and end of KS tests, standardised tests in Mathematics and reading.
- Regular continuous assessment is central to teaching and learning practice, including written observations at Foundation stage level.

4. Intervention

It is expected that the great majority of pupils in Bunscoil an Iúir, will make at least the expected rate of progress through quality, class-based teaching. However, for some pupils this approach may not be sufficient and these pupils, at various stages, may benefit from additional small group or 1:1 intervention programmes to enable them to make the progress required to achieve their full potential.

Central to the effective planning of an intervention programme is the knowledge the teacher has of a particular pupil or groups of pupils. When considering pupils for either Code of Practice Stage 1 or 2 interventions, a wide range of assessment evidence is drawn upon to support judgements made about pupil progress. (c.f. SEN Policy)

5. Pupil Grouping

All classes are mixed ability. In order to meet the learning objectives and learning needs and provide appropriate challenge and support for all pupils, teachers use a range of grouping options across the year group and within their classes.

- ability groups across the year (maths, phonics)
- skills based grouping (guided reading/writing)
- paired work (response partners) to facilitate discussion
- individual work
- pupil choice
- whole class groups

6. The Learning Environment

Our classrooms are attractive learning environments. Displays are changed regularly, to ensure that the classroom reflects the topics studied by the children. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display their best work at some time during the year. Highly visual and interactive displays, for example, 'learning walls', are used to engage pupils and encourage self-help strategies.

All classrooms are extremely well resourced (each room containing an interactive whiteboard, classroom computers/laptops with internet access, class libraries of fiction and non-fiction books etc) facilitating a wide range of different teaching and learning activities.

We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning, and an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources and high-quality work by the children. Creative use of internal space has provided areas for small group intervention work or 1:1 tuition and increasingly.

In Foundation Stage, the learning environment is designed to encourage the children to move freely between areas within the classroom.

7. Curriculum Organisation

We use the National Curriculum and the Primary Framework to guide our teaching. These set out the aims and objectives and detail what is to be taught in each year group. Our medium and short term lesson plans contain detailed information about the teaching activities and tasks to be set, the resources needed, ICT used and the type of assessment to be used.

In personalising the curriculum, we aim to find appropriate challenges for pupils and address their particular needs so that they may all have an equal opportunity to succeed.

We aim to cater for the needs and interests of a full range of learners including:

- the gifted and talented
- learners with learning difficulties and disabilities
- girls and boys
- looked after children
- learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

8. The Extended Curriculum

Helping pupils to discover and/or develop new interests is essential to personalised learning at Bunscoil an Iúir. During the school year a range of activities are organised to enhance the curriculum:-

- Mini-club, Homework club, After-School club, etc.
- Visits
- Visitors including Spanish lessons, GAA skills, etc.

This approach extends beyond school hours. The school hosts a number of community activities:

- Hosting Bunscoil an Iúir, 's summer club
- Community swimming pool
- Local library

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. In so doing, we follow the ELB guidance on Off-Site visits and volunteers.

9. Supporting children's wider needs

Schools that are able to identify barriers to learning beyond the classroom and address them, are in a strong position to provide personalised learning for individual pupils. In Bunscoil an Iúir, we aim to establish good relationships with all our families and to provide a climate open to dialogue. Within school, we can offer advice and support through our school-based services, for example:

- Pastoral care
- School nurse
- Educational Psychologist
- Speech and language therapy
- Social Services
- Outside agencies

Where additional support from other agencies is required, a 'team around the child' approach may be needed.

The role of governors / Ról na nGobharnóirí

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 helping to allocate resources effectively.
- ensure that the school buildings and premises promote successful teaching and learning.
- ensure that high quality staff are appointed.
- 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 and learning
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning policies through the PRSD process. These include reports from subject leaders and the Principal's termly report to governors as well as a review of the in-service training sessions attended by our staff.

The role of the school / Ról na Scoile

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

- holding curriculum evenings to explain our school strategies for teaching the National Curriculum;
- sending information to parents at the start of each term in which we outline the curriculum that the children will be studying during that term at school;
- sending annual 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 homework. We suggest, for example, regular shared reading with very young children, and support for older children with their projects and/or investigative work
- holding parents' evenings which provide an opportunity to discuss progress children are making.

The role of Parents / Ról na dTuistí

We believe that parents, as their child's primary educator, have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. Parents have a responsibility 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;
- ensure that their child is supported with homework activities which consolidate learning
- inform us of their child's interests and capabilities
- 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.

The role of the child / Ról an Pháiste

We believe that the child has a responsibility to:

- participate as fully as possible in the learning opportunities and help other children to do the same
- work hard and try his/her best
- behave appropriately in school according to the school's behaviour code
- be polite and helpful to other pupils and adults in school
- come to school regularly and be on time
- talk at home about what he/she has learnt at school
- take good care of the school environment
- do the homework regularly and bring it back to school
- wear the correct school uniform
- tell the teacher or an adult at home if he/she finds the work difficult

Monitoring and review

All our teachers reflect on their strengths/areas for development and their professional development needs are planned for accordingly. We provide internal and external guidance to support our teachers in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding so that they can continually improve their practice.