



# **Cookstown High School**

## **Learning & Teaching Policy**

**Reviewed: March 2022**

**Next Review: March 2025**

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## POLICY OVERVIEW

### DETAILS

<b>TITLE</b>	Learning and Teaching Policy
<b>TARGET AUDIENCE</b>	Governors', Staff, Parents/Guardians
<b>REVIEW DATE</b>	March 2022
<b>REVIEW LEAD</b>	Principal
<b>POLICY DEVELOPED BY</b>	Senior Leadership Team
<b>POLICY RATIFIED BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS ON:</b>	March 2022
<b>EFFECTIVE FROM:</b>	March 2022
<b>REVIEW FREQUENCY:</b>	Every three years (minimum)
<b>REVIEW DATE:</b>	March 2025
<b>PRINCIPAL</b>	Miss G J Evans
<b>CHAIR OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS</b>	Mrs L Dripps

## RECORD OF POLICY AMENDMENTS

The following table outlines any significant changes/amendments made to this procedure since it was ratified by the Board of Governors on:

<b>DATE OF REVIEW OR AMENDMENT</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF CHANGED / AMENDMENTS TO PROCEDURE</b>	<b>AMENDED BY</b>

## 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 take 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
- 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 extra-curricular activities.
- The development of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills is emphasised in each Key Stage 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 formatively, 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 & 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 Subject 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 Subject 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, through timely intervention.
- The provision of effective Careers Education, Information and Guidance (CEAIG) across all Key Stages, providing opportunities to assist pupils as they 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

### The learning environment will stimulate and motivate pupils

- The classroom itself will provide a stimulating and challenging learning environment
- Learning contexts will reflect pupils' interests, previous experiences and future development
- Teachers will seek to motivate pupils to work with a 'Can do' approach and provide a caring yet challenging environment.

### All teachers will work, individually and collectively, to provide effective plans for all courses and programmes as well as day to day activities

- Teaching plans will specify concisely and clearly what pupils are expected to learn
- Planning will be carried out with previous evaluation of pupil viewpoints
- Teaching plans will specify how and when learning takes place
- Learning outcomes will be clearly stated
- Assessment for Learning strategies will be clearly stated
- Assessment information will be used effectively to identify pupils' needs, plan next steps in learning and ensure continuity and progression
- Plans will take account of national and local curriculum guidelines and school policies
- Activities, including homework, will make effective use of the pupils' and teachers' time
- Opportunities for planning with colleagues will be used
- Programmes and lessons will be planned to make appropriate use of ICT

### Teachers will ensure that a range of inclusive teaching strategies, appropriate to the context and the needs of pupils, is used in the delivery of lessons and programmes

- Teaching approaches, including the use of ICT, will be well matched and tailored to pupils' learning needs and provide a wide range of learning experiences
- Teaching approaches will maximise the opportunities available to work directly with pupils in appropriate and well-planned whole-class, group and individual situations
- Homework will be purposeful, challenging and linked to class work
- Approaches will be designed to successfully develop pupils' independent thinking skills

### Interactions with pupils are positive and effective

- Teachers will share the aim of the lesson with pupils
- Teachers' explanations, expositions and instructions will be unambiguous and pitched at an appropriate level
- Discussions with pupils will promote learning and build confidence
- Teachers will encourage and value pupils' contributions
- Teachers should use praise as an effective motivation for learning

### Questioning of pupils will be clear and purposeful

- Questioning pupils is a vital method for developing understanding and identifying weaknesses
- Pupils' responses will be listened to and used effectively and time given to respond.
- Teachers will take care to involve all pupils
- Questioning will aim to elicit information on more than mere recall of facts i.e. processing, reasoning, speculation, evaluation etc
- Where questioning indicates weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding, efforts will be made to ascertain where learning went wrong so that errors can be identified and remedial measures put in place

### The school will encourage pupils to be fully involved in their own learning

- Teachers will encourage and give opportunity for pupils to take responsibility for, and be active in, their own learning
- Pupils will be required and helped to think for themselves and reflect on ideas, issues and experiences
- Teachers will aim to ensure that pupils have a very good understanding of what is required to improve

### Pupils will learn to work effectively with others

- Teachers will provide pupils with regular opportunities to work collaboratively in a variety of circumstances
- Teachers will require pupils to work in groups, which will vary in composition and size

### The school will ensure that the learning needs of all pupils are effectively met

- Tasks and activities will be differentiated and well matched to the needs of individual pupils
- Teachers will choose resources very carefully to address pupils learning needs
- Teachers will use approaches that focus on pupils achieving their next steps in learning
- Pupils will be allowed to contribute to setting their own learning targets
- Productive links will be made with other learning opportunities
- Teachers will take account of pupil's linguistic and cultural background
- When working with individuals or groups of pupils with differing abilities or aptitudes, all will be challenged at an appropriate level through carefully judged provision
- Teachers will identify learning needs systematically
- Teachers will ensure that barriers to learning are clearly addressed
- The school will carefully identify and attend to the special needs of looked after children
- The contribution of learning support staff will be managed to maximise their contribution to meeting pupils' needs

### Teachers will use methods of assessment and recording, which are well matched to clearly identified purposes

- Teachers will use assessment to make judgements about progress towards curricular targets
- Teachers will use an appropriate range of formal and informal assessment approaches
- Teachers will use an effective means of recording and summarising assessment information
- When required, tests will be used effectively, in accordance with local and national guidance

Judgements made in the course of teaching will be based on valid knowledge about individual pupils

- Teachers will ensure that they become knowledgeable about all pupils in their charge
- Teachers will analyse and interpret relevant data to address underachievement through the identification of pupils' learning needs and setting of learning targets
- Teachers will constantly seek to find out how individuals are dealing with key learning aims and tasks, how successful they are and what difficulties they are meeting
- The school will have appropriate arrangements to moderate and validate teachers' judgements

Teachers will use assessment information for the benefit of individual pupils and to refine future teaching and learning

- Pupils will be informed on a regular basis about their progress and attainment and the form teacher will discuss progress 4 times a year individually with the pupil across all subjects studied.
- Subject teachers and form teachers will engage pupils in appropriate dialogue about their progress and value their views
- Teachers will be committed to the importance of identifying next steps in learning
- Summaries and record will be used to:
  - Periodically inform pupils
  - Provide a basis for reporting to parents
  - Foster continuity of and progression in learning from stage to stage
- Teachers will make full use of assessment information to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching and inform future provision and progression

The school will be accountable to parents and report effectively to them about each pupil's progress

- The school will encourage parents to communicate on matters pertaining to their children's progress
- Opportunities to consult with teachers will be readily available
- Formal occasions will be well organised and all arrangements communicated clearly
- Written reports to parents will be in a helpful format, which avoids undue focussing on pupils' attitude; provide clear information and details of how each pupil is progressing; cover all aspects of the curriculum, including personal and social development; and indicate the next stages in each pupil's learning
- Parents are encouraged to respond to these reports
- Parents' views and enquiries about their child's attainment and progress will be considered promptly and carefully
- The school will provide an effective response to such views and enquiries and facilitate feedback

The school will foster meaningful contacts with the wider community

- The school will liaise and co-operate with relevant bodies at a local level to ensure that the curriculum (teaching and learning) of the school is relevant to, informs and is informed by the needs of the wider community and the pupils drawn from the same.

## 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 (Curriculum) leads learning and teaching within school working closely with Curriculum Leaders and subject co-ordinators.*

*Curriculum Leaders and Subject Co-ordinators lead learning and teaching within their subject areas and areas of responsibility.*

*Teaching staff work closely with their support staff 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.

## Linked Documents

Assessment Policy