

**HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY SCHOOL
MAGHERAFELT**



TEACHING & LEARNING GUIDELINES

POLICY STATEMENT

Holy Family Primary School
Teaching and Learning Guidelines

The following are not intended to be a definitive statement on teaching and learning - our thinking on matters of teaching and learning is constantly evolving and is informed by ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Ethos

In Holy Family Primary we are very conscious that effective learning can only happen in a context where there are positive relationships at all levels. In particular, we see the relationship between teacher and child as being especially important in the promotion of effective learning. We aim to foster relationships based on mutual respect in the context of providing an open, caring and supportive environment within the classroom. We see the creation of an attractive, stimulating well organised and resourced classroom as being conducive to effective learning.

At all times we seek to enhance the self esteem of our pupils while encouraging them to be flexible and independent. We want to enthuse and motivate our pupils to achieve highly and to celebrate their successes where and when possible. We praise and acknowledge children's efforts and attitudes to learning as well as their attainments.

All pupils regardless of ability / disability are catered for in a spirit of inclusion. We aim to provide pupils with equal and maximum access to a rich and challenging curriculum commensurate with their talents and abilities and regardless of any impediments to learning. Fostering a love of learning and a climate of enquiry is central to our overall teaching and learning objectives. We are concerned for the holistic development of the child.

The creation of such an inclusive learning environment promotes active learning which engages pupils in problem solving and investigations.

We have very high expectations of our pupils and communicate these to them on a regular basis. The children are challenged to extend their learning and appropriate support is given when children are experiencing difficulties.

Teaching

The starting point for all our teaching is what children know already. We seek to build on the children's previous learning, experiences and interests. We use techniques such as mind mapping to establish the children's previous knowledge of topics etc. We help the children to link the knowledge/ skills which they have acquired in a number of different contexts so that they can connect their learning. Opportunities are sought to promote Literacy and Numeracy across the curriculum.

The children are actively involved in planning for their subsequent learning in determining suitable learning outcomes for topics etc. Learning is matched to the needs of the learner.

The WALT and WILF strategies are integral to the structure of all our lessons. The children are made fully aware of the learning outcomes for the session and the success criteria on which assessments may be made. During the lesson itself we aim to develop the children's thinking by asking open ended and searching questions which help the children to think logically, flexibly and make suitable decisions. We encourage the children to talk about their learning at every opportunity and to verbalise internal thinking. Sufficient time is allowed for children to respond to questions, to ask questions of their own and to clarify their own thought processes.

Constant reference is made to the WALT/ WILF throughout the lesson as a way of focussing and consolidating the children's learning. The plenary session is especially important in providing children with the opportunity to reflect upon and to further consolidate their learning. The children can then draw on these reflections and evaluations to plan ahead for future learning.

We carefully plan for a range of assessment opportunities. These can take a number of different formats and are not confined to pencil and paper exercises.

Opportunities are also sought to provide children with constructive feedback regarding their learning and to identify next steps including targets. Children are encouraged to formulate their own targets in discussion with their teachers and parents. We draw upon relevant data from INCAS(CBA)/ PIE/ PIM to inform the process of setting pupil targets for Numeracy and literacy. This is referenced to NRIT outcomes.

Our lessons are carefully planned and paced to ensure that effective learning is taking place and that children are being challenged throughout. We employ a range of teaching styles and approaches including whole class / group / individual instruction and are mindful of the different learning styles of children. We try to reflect aspects of all these learning styles in terms of how we plan and frame our lessons.

The children are given opportunities to work in pairs / groups / independently. There is an appropriate balance between practical, written and oral work. Lessons provide variety in terms of structure, content and context.

We encourage learning to take place outside the classroom by way of trips / visitors etc and see this as a way of encouraging children to see the relevance of their learning to everyday life. We try wherever possible to make lessons as practical and as hands on as possible and to make constant links to everyday life. Our use of resources reflects this approach as we seek to recreate authentic learning scenarios within the classroom.

The use of ICT as a teaching and learning tool is absolutely crucial in this context and we are constantly looking at ways of using new technologies to enhance the children's learning.

Learning

We want the children to enjoy their learning and to be actively engaged throughout lessons. We encourage collaborative learning and promote individual and peer appraisal. Every engagement with a child is considered important in shaping and directing his / her learning. Our classroom assistants are carefully deployed to this end.

We strongly encourage the children to talk about their learning to be creative, to ask probing questions and to take risks with their learning.

The standards which children aspire to are clearly understood by the children and are suitably challenging.

We support the children in their learning in a caring and sensitive way. The support and engagement of parents in their child's learning is actively sought.

Overall, we seek to ensure that there is a consistent approach to Teaching and Learning with the school while at the same time recognising that different members of staff have different interests, strengths and talents. We redeploy teachers to ensure that all children have access to the particular talents of individual teachers.

This policy statement is subject to review on an annual basis.