

ST PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL



Teaching & Learning Policy
Reviewed September 2016

Teaching and Learning Policy

Introduction

We the staff of St Patrick's Primary School, believe in the concept of lifelong learning and that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience. Through our teaching we equip the pupils with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to make informed choices about their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help our pupils to lead happy and rewarding lives.

Our staff are dedicated to providing high quality teaching and learning experiences for all pupils. All staff work together with parents, Parish and community to ensure that every child is treated as a unique individual, able to fulfil his or her potential in a safe and secure environment. Teachers use a variety of strategies to ensure every child's needs are catered for and high standards are achieved. We believe that effective teaching and learning occurs when children are encouraged, supported and nurtured, within a caring, Catholic ethos. This policy outlines what we believe to be the key elements of effective teaching and learning, thereby ensuring that children perform to the highest standards and achieve their full potential.

Aims of this Policy

As a Catholic School, we at St Patrick's, Legamaddy, seek to provide a caring, secure and happy environment in which all children are treated as unique individuals who are given the opportunity to grow in independence and develop self-confidence.

We believe this will enable our children to be better prepared personally, academically, spiritually and socially for the challenges of young adult life.

We aim to:

- Develop the young person as an individual and help them become a positive contributor to society.
- Enable children to reach their full potential by providing a broad and balanced curriculum with a varied range of extra-curricular activities.
- Work closely with home, community & church to create an environment in which we promote learning.
- Develop spiritual awareness through a strong Catholic Ethos which encourages the values of trust, honesty, respect, tolerance and a sense of fair play.
- Utilize emerging technologies to develop the child's ability to become effective learners and provide them with the life skills for modern society.

We aim to do this through:

- Promoting the Catholic caring ethos of our school
- Meeting the needs of every child
- Identifying and providing high quality SEN teaching and learning opportunities
- Promoting all children's and staff self-esteem and self confidence
- Promoting and embedding problem solving strategies and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities into all teaching and learning.
- Promoting transfer of knowledge and skills across all areas of the curriculum
- Encouraging lifelong learners
- Involving pupils fully in their own learning, planning and assessment
- Recognising and encouraging pupils' qualities, interests and talents
- Providing achievable challenges, with consistently high expectations for each child
- Developing children's communication skills across all areas of the curriculum
- Fostering a respect for self and others and for agreed rules and building friendships
- Promoting and encouraging healthy choices in diet, hygiene and exercise
- Developing and encouraging positive attitudes to teaching and learning
- Involving and supporting parents as co educators of their children
- Providing top quality ICT experiences, to build confident e-learners, equipped to embrace the technology of the future

Effective Learning

In St Patrick's Primary School, Legamaddy we believe that pupils learn best when;

- Their individual learning styles are catered for –Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic
- The lessons are varied, well planned, stimulating, challenging and differentiated to suit the individual needs of every child
- They are aware of what is expected of them –with clear learning intentions outlined at the beginning of each lesson
- Teachers communicate high expectations and pupils believe they can achieve these
- Rules, rewards and sanctions are agreed with pupils and clearly understood and carried out consistently
- They are encouraged and praised for their efforts
- They are enthusiastically involved in their own learning, planning, evaluating their work and setting targets/goals – AFL
- A plenary is carried out after each lesson to help gauge learning and to inform future planning.
- Children are involved in school development planning and the use of a child friendly school development plan.

The Learning Environment

We believe that children learn best when they are taught in a happy, secure and safe environment. We aim to provide this by -

- Promoting positive relationships through the school, between teachers and children, pupils and their peers and amongst staff
- Valuing all opinions
- The stability and security of everyday routines
- Ensuring classrooms are attractive and well organised
- Displaying and adhering to the school behaviour policy and rules
- Using a wide range of learning opportunities
- Celebrating children's learning through displays (WOW board)
- Encouraging responsibility for each-others and schools property
- Providing a varied range of suitable resources and encouraging children to independently access these
- Grouping children according to what best supports their learning at that time

We use a variety of teaching approaches and learning experiences to enable, empower and challenge each child, relevant to their needs. These include –

- Whole class, group, pairs and individual teaching
- Using ICT effectively to enhance learning
- Fully involving pupils in the planning process based on previous knowledge and connected learning
- Play and activity based learning in FS and KS1
- SENCO and other agencies involved in supporting individual needs
- Using effective questioning
- Pace of the lesson suited to the learner
- Providing practical, creative and problem solving experiences (weekly puzzle)
- Relevant educational trips and visits
- The use of visitors and speakers
- Use of task boards and extension activities
- Effective plenary sessions to review learning
- AFL, marking for improvement, verbal feedback, peer and self-assessment and setting goals
- Use of school buildings and grounds e.g. football, drama, play
- Celebration of success through praise, Super Students, Prize Board, Green Letter Home, visit to principal, sharing in assembly

- Staff CPD to ensure up to date and continuous improvement in standards of teaching and learning

Additional Adults

In St Patrick's PS, Legamaddy all staff are valued and involved in the learning experiences of the children. Classroom assistants are an important support in the teaching and learning process. Where appropriate, classroom assistants enhance learning by –

- Being involved in the planning process with the teacher
- Being clear about who they are supporting and why
- Being directed by the teacher to support learning
- Fully engaging with pupils during lesson times
- Discussing outcomes and future teaching and learning experiences with the teacher
- Being respected and valued by pupils as a caring adult

All school staff has a responsibility to model the school ethos and values, thereby teaching children respect, kindness and inclusion

Planning for Learning

Teachers use planning as a means to ensure progression, to address the needs of all learners and to ensure every child has full access to a broad and balanced curriculum. At St. Patrick'S PS, Legamaddy the planning process begins with the Northern Ireland Programmes of Study, half termly planning/(or weekly if appropriate in FS), Weekly plans and daily notes.

Planning for effective teaching and Learning involves –

- Starting from children's own experiences and previous knowledge
- Assisting pupils to make connections with their own life experiences, through the provision of opportunity for connected learning
- Having clear learning intentions and success criteria, allowing for progression of skills, knowledge and understanding
- Awareness of different learning styles (VAK)
- Clarifying the range of teaching styles and approaches used
- Providing opportunities for connected learning and transfer of skills
- Detailing resources to be used
- Including all abilities referring to IEPs/groups, Under and potential under achievers, gifted and talented.

- Embedding Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities
- Effective, reflective and honest evaluations of teaching and learning, to inform future planning
- Detailing, where appropriate, class and school targets
- Observation and assessment details where relevant
- Planning notes are seen as working documents

We ensure continuity and progression take place through –

- Schemes of work
- Agreed assessment and recording approaches
- Staff sharing best practice
- Co-ordinators monitoring planning
- Internal standardisation of work in each year group
- Staff attendance at any EA course to ensure we employ the most up to date strategies.

Strategies for teaching pupils with Special Educational Needs

In St Patrick's PS Legamaddy, we strongly believe that every child has the right to access a full, broad and balanced curriculum and to be taught in a supportive manner, according to his or her needs.

In keeping with the Code of Practice for SEN, the class teacher, SENCO and any relevant outside agencies, work together to develop a planned programme suited to the needs of the individual child. See Special Educational Needs Policy.

We use the following strategies to support children with Special Educational Needs –

- Identifying children with SEN at an early stage in order to implement early intervention strategies
- Differentiation within planning and class teaching, suited to the individual's needs
- Developing of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with SMART targets in conjunction with parents, the child and all adults involved
- Weekly self-evaluations completed by the child
- Effective use of classroom assistants to support learning
- Regular evaluation of targets and communication with parents and relevant personnel with regard to progress and future planning
- Praise, encouragement and celebration of success and effort

We believe that Gifted and Talented children are those who have the potential to develop significantly beyond what is expected for their age. This may be academic, creative, sporting or expressive. We employ the following strategies when teaching gifted and talented pupils –

- Work is differentiated to provide challenges and includes problem solving and investigations
- Teachers communicate higher expectations to gifted and talented children
- Children's successes and achievements are celebrated and shared
- Children are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities
- Children are given increased responsibility and independence
- Opportunities are provided for children to share and make the most of their talents in the school and community

Assessment

In St Patrick's PS, Legamaddy we believe that the purpose of assessment is to provide information to teachers and pupils in order improve teaching and learning and ultimately to raise standards and empower lifelong learners. We believe in a holist approach when making an assessment on a child and take into account both quantative and qualitive data. We also take into account a number of contributory factors e.g. bereavement, marital breakups

We use the following standardised tests with pupils from P3-P7.

The New Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT) P3 and P5

Progress in Maths (PIM) and Progress in English (PIE) P3-P7

The test results are analysed by staff who use the data to inform the School Development Plan, according to areas needing improvement. Results are discussed with the Board of Governors. End of Key Stage data is used for measuring performance and benchmarking with similar schools. Teachers use the data to set class and individual targets and devise strategies to reach these targets. Teachers and co-ordinators collect evidence of improvement.

P2 children are diagnostically assessed using the Middle Infant Screening Test in term 2. The SENCO uses results to identify children who would benefit from the Forward Together Programme and to help teachers put early intervention strategies into place, with the help of classroom assistants.

Teachers use their own on-going assessments throughout the year.

Assessment For Learning is carried out by teachers and pupils through self and peer assessment in order to -

- Involve children in their own learning through shared Learning Intentions, skills and knowledge needed and agreed success criteria
- Empower children to take responsibility for their learning and become lifelong learners
- Provide relevant feedback which can be used by pupils to improve their learning, self-esteem, confidence and performance

Outcomes of assessment are used to inform future planning for teaching and learning.

Monitoring and Evaluating

In St Patrick's PS, Legamaddy, we recognise the need for regular monitoring and evaluating of the teaching and learning, in order to bring about improvement and to raise standards.

Staff reflect on and evaluate their own teaching and learning and use the outcomes to inform future planning.

The principal and subject co-ordinators regularly monitor, in order to ensure targets set in action plans are being met. They do this through -

- Regular book scoops
- Staff audits and questionnaires to inform SDP
- Classroom observations and feedback to individual teachers
- PRSD observations
- Sharing best practice
- Evaluating Action plans of the SDP
- Reviewing IEP targets
- Standardised tests
- Target setting and review
- End of key stage data
- Benchmarking data
- Monitoring planning and teacher evaluations
- Internal standardising of pieces of work
- Monitoring displays reflecting children's learning
- Meetings with staff to provide feedback and information

Home/School Links

At St Patrick's PS, Legamaddy, parents are welcomed, kept informed of their children's progress, and provided with information and help to support their learning. This is carried out through -

- School Website, including links and downloads to support learning at home
- September curriculum meetings in each year group
- School and class Newsletters
- Yearly and interim written reports
- Informal and on-going meetings
- Parent/teacher Interviews and update reviews, reporting children's progress
- Comments used in marking for improvement
- Homework which is differentiated and relating to class teaching and learning (see homework policy)
- Open day for prospective P1 parents and children
- Displays of children's work
- Parent workshops, day and evening

Staff Professional Development

Staff Development in St Patrick's PS, Legamaddy is closely linked with the SDP. The SDP outlines the professional development needs of staff in order to achieve targets set out in the action plans, and is regularly reviewed. INSET and training days are arranged, where appropriate.

Targets for PRSD are agreed and are monitored by members of the SMT.

Staff are encouraged and supported to pursue their own professional development and to share best practice.

Community Partnerships

In St. Patrick's PS, Legamaddy, we believe that our school is at the heart of the community and learning is enhanced through a wide range of experiences and opportunities. We have developed links with the wider community, which include –

- Involvement in parish masses, ceremonies and events
- Links with nursery, primary and post primary schools
- Library visits
- Visitors and speakers

- Visits to local businesses
- Sports training from local GAA/soccer coaches
- Links with the local council – recycling, parades, workshops
- Local competitions and events
- Charitable work
- Close links with Bright Cross Community Centre

Development, Monitoring, Review and Evaluation of Policy.

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with staff. As part of the school's monitoring and evaluation process, we continually strive to adapt and improve our practice to meet our pupils' needs. This policy will be reviewed in 2019

School Principal: _____

Signed Board of Governors: _____

