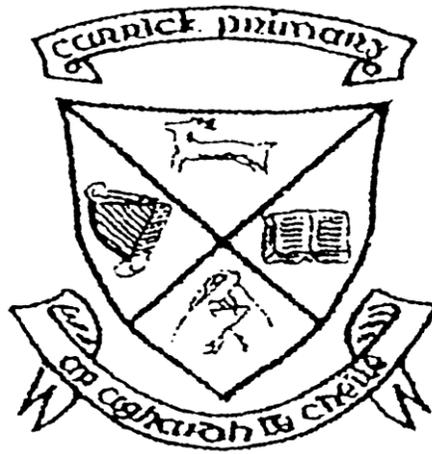


Carrick Primary School



Teaching and Learning Policy

May 2016

Carrick Primary School

Vision Statement

Forward Together: “Ar aghaidh le cheile”.

Mission Statement

In Carrick Primary School we aim to provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment, in order to realise and celebrate the academic and non-academic potential of all our pupils. We expect our pupils to work hard and for parents to assist us in helping children to learn and to become lifelong learners.

School Aims

We aim to:

- develop and strengthen each pupil’s understanding and love of Catholic values by promoting the Catholic ethos throughout the school;
- create a safe, enjoyable learning environment, in which effective learning is facilitated and quality teaching is provided;
- implement all aspects of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- help our pupils to develop a positive attitude towards life and a love of learning;
- value, respect and nurture every child in our care;
- encourage pupils to respect themselves and others and to support and care for one another;
- equip our children with the necessary life skills to enable them to participate in a fast changing society;
- Endorse the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child and work towards the implementation of policies and practices which reflect the Convention; and
- involve the parents, Board of Governors and wider community in the life of the school and in the holistic development of the children in our care.

The Quality of Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning are at the heart of a school's work. The staff acknowledges that the connection between teaching and learning is complex and that the quality of teaching directly influences the effectiveness of learning. The staff members are committed to improving teaching and learning for pupils, the staff, the school and the wider community. Hence the development and improvement of teaching and learning are central components within the School Development Plan.

Within Carrick, pupils are given opportunities to learn through well planned and purposeful teaching. Learning is encouraged through the use of a variety of teaching methods, resources and interactions. Pupils are encouraged to take personal responsibility for their own learning and to use their preferred learning style. Collaborative learning is used appropriately. Pupils are encouraged to take an active role in their own learning, and to be more aware of what they have learned, why they have learned it and how they have learned it. The children are also encouraged to reflect on what helps them learn, and what to do if they are stuck i.e. WALT Boards and WILF Boards. Active learning methods and experiences are also used to promote learning and photographic evidence of these experiences is kept by each teacher. Every effort is made to create a stimulating learning environment, in which effective learning is facilitated and quality teaching is provided. The children are encouraged to transfer and to apply skills and concepts to other areas of learning and to think independently and "outside the box".

"The principal goal of education is to create men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done".

Jean Piaget

Effective Learning

We acknowledge that people learn in different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow children to learn in ways that best suit them. In Carrick we take into account the different forms of intelligence and different levels of knowledge when planning for learning.

Much emphasis is placed upon the quality of teaching and the development of strategies for improving the quality of teaching. When teaching we focus on motivating the children and building upon their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We use the school curriculum policies to guide our teaching. These set out the aims and values of the school and detail what is to be taught to each year group. We ensure that the curriculum provided is broad, balanced and well planned and that there is progression and continuity from year to year. Opportunities are provided for the development of a cross-curricular approach.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's levels of attainments. Our prime focus is to further develop the knowledge and skills of the children. We strive to

ensure that the tasks set are appropriate to each child's or group's level of ability, to their interests and to their experiences.

Encouraging Independence

In Carrick, we encourage the development of independent and life-long learning through the use of:

- Access to resources;
- Strategies for self-help;
- Word banks, dictionaries, thesaurus etc;
- Class responsibilities, rotas, prefect systems;
- Class Charters (RRS) and
- ICT applications.

Recognising and Celebrating Success

In Carrick, we recognise and celebrate the successes of staff, of pupils, of past pupils and of people in the wider community.

We do this by:

- Positive initiatives in classes;
- Displaying work in classes, around the school and at assembly;
- Awarding Student of the Month certificates;
- Awarding Star Awards Certificates;
- Awarding Head Teacher's Certificates;
- Awarding ICT Certificates;
- Displaying photographs;
- Hosting celebratory assemblies;
- Using the school's website and
- Informing parents through letters and newsletters.

Classroom Management

Our learning environments are managed in such a way as to facilitate different styles of learning, and to reflect our Special Educational Needs Policy and our other school policies.

In the classroom we use:

- Whole class teaching;
- Group work, organised according to appropriate criteria (i.e. ability, mixed ability, interest, friendship/behaviour);
- One to one teaching;
- Collaborative learning in pairs or groups; and
- Independent learning.

All areas of the learning environment are planned for, including, where appropriate, the outside areas, in order to ensure opportunities for a range of practical activities, which will develop appropriate skills, concepts and knowledge.

We believe that a safe, stimulating environment creates a climate which is conducive to learning and which promotes the independent use of resources and high-quality work by the children. We have high expectations of all children, and we believe that their work here in Carrick Primary School is of the highest possible standard. We use classroom observations, children's written work, homework, half termly test results, NINA, NILA, PiE and PiM data, NRIT scores and End of Key Stage results to inform future planning. We review the progress of each child regularly and plan accordingly. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to play an active role in the life of the school and the wider community. Children may be involved in evaluation activities, within their own class and/or at whole school level.

Teachers, Classroom Assistants, Peripatetic Teachers, Learning Support Teachers, Volunteers and External Agencies support children with Special Educational Needs, as detailed in their Individual Education Plans.

We raise expectations by:

- making effective use of qualitative and quantitative data;
- setting targets;
- using WALT /WILF boards;
- agreeing class and school charters;
- promoting the school's aims; and
- monitoring, evaluating and reviewing progress.

Relationships

Our members of staff make a special effort to establish good working relationships with all the children, with other members of staff and with parents and carers. We treat the children with kindness and respect and provide them with equal opportunities to take part in class and school activities. The pupils are well motivated; they work well with all staff members in an atmosphere of mutual respect and good-natured co-operation.

Staff encourage pupils:

- to enjoy school;
- to be well behaved;
- to demonstrate self-discipline and to respond well in class; and
- to take pride in their work and show by their interest and attention that they value the contribution made by others.

The pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem are enhanced by the nature of the teachers' responses to their work and their behaviour.

Behaviour Management

All staff members follow the agreed school policy with regard to Positive Behaviour and classroom management. We discuss and agree Class Charters and the School Charter with children. We expect all children to follow these covenants which we jointly devise, in order to provide the best learning opportunities for all. We praise children for their efforts and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. We insist on good behaviour at all times. When children misbehave we follow the guidelines for sanctions as outlined in our Positive Behaviour Policy.

The Positive Behaviour Team provides support and guidance for staff in relation to full implementation of the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Classroom Assistants

We deploy classroom assistants to assist the class teacher in delivering the curriculum effectively.

Classroom Organisation and Resources

Our classrooms are organised flexibly, to facilitate learning and to promote the development of independence. Resources are used effectively by:

- having well maintained resources, which are used to facilitate learning for all;
- encouraging pupils to act independently in choosing, collecting, sharing and returning resources where appropriate;
- ensuring that items of display which support learning are used appropriately to encourage recall and independence and to celebrate successful learning;
- using a wide range of materials;
- creating reading areas/book corners which are as comfortable and attractive as possible;
- using labels, posters and displays which aim to enhance classrooms;
- having play areas in Foundation Stage, in which role play is facilitated through regular changes to the learning environment;
- ensuring that pupils are involved in the maintenance and care of all equipment and resources, i.e. “We care and respect other people’s property”;
- Our classrooms and corridors are attractive learning environments. We update our displays regularly to ensure that the classrooms reflect the topics being studied by the children. We ensure that all children have opportunities to display their work in the classroom and around the school.

Learning Resources

Investigative, problem solving and research based tasks take place using a range of resources including:

- books (fiction and nonfiction);
- a variety of writing tools;
- practical equipment ;
- video camera/ipad/Samsung tablet (1 of each);
- digital camera;
- C2K software;
- internet;
- interactive whiteboards;
- play resources;
- outdoor resources;
- local environment;
- Active Inspire;
- flipcharts;
- whiteboards;
- WALT/WILF boards;
- visitors;
- peers;
- school grounds;
- educational trips;
- curriculum materials/textbooks;
- ICT devices;
- microscopes;
- microphones; and
- items brought in from home to aid learning.

We will ensure that the materials used are appropriate to the individual needs of the children.

Planning for the Curriculum

Planning within Carrick is thorough and takes place on a half-termly basis, in year group teams. The plans reflect the Northern Ireland Curriculum, the School Development Plan, schemes of work, Half-Termly plans and the policies of the school.

Half-Termly Planning documents can be accessed by the Principal, Key Stage Co-ordinators, Subject Co-ordinators and Teachers on “Public”.

The Learning Support Teacher, Peripatetic Teacher and Classroom Assistants are involved in planning to ensure the effective learning of all children.

Planning for Teaching and Learning

Our planning includes the following elements which have been agreed throughout the school:

- clearly defined Learning Intentions which are shared, when appropriate, with the children at the beginning of lessons;
- an introduction which establishes an appropriate learning environment and connects the learning;
- differentiated tasks (where appropriate);
- use of appropriate resources;
- use of self and peer evaluation (where appropriate);
- use of ICT ;
- topic approach;
- review and evaluation;
- effective questioning; and
- sharing success criteria.

The planning reflects the fact that:

- children demonstrate knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways;
- there is a need to build on children's previous experiences and learning;
- there is a need to prepare children for future learning;
- there is a need to provide a variety of learning experiences which reflect various learning styles; and
- there is a need to provide opportunities for children to work independently, in pairs and in larger groups.

Our plans are derived from the Northern Ireland Curriculum, the Literacy Strategy Framework and the Northern Ireland Strategy for Numeracy. They contain information about the learning outcomes, the content, teaching and learning approaches, ICT, differentiation, resources, and the way we assess the children's work (where appropriate). We evaluate our planning at the end of each half-term, so that we can modify and improve our future teaching and planning. Teachers plan ahead to take account of the total time available for the subject within a key stage, and, where relevant, to make effective use of the potential contribution of other subjects or areas of learning.

Teaching approaches which are fit for purpose

The teachers make use of teaching methods which are suitable for the situation and the time available, and which meet the needs of individual pupils, groups of pupils and their class as a whole; they do not confine themselves to any single teaching approach. Such methods will empower the children and will encourage the holistic development of the children.

The teachers' expectations are realistically high, and the pupils understand what is expected of them; the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are developed through challenging activities which require them to think as well as to 'do'.

The teachers ensure that class work has a purpose and is well-ordered: they provide opportunities for the development of the key skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT.

The teachers regularly monitor the extent to which the pupils understand what they are being taught; they make use of assessment to consolidate and develop the pupils' learning.

- Close links are developed between the local Pre-School Providers and the Primary School.
- Close links are also developed between the Primary School and the local Secondary and Grammar Schools.
- Subject co-ordinators are involved in the development of individual curriculum areas, in order to ensure continuity and progression throughout the school.
- There is liaison between subject/area coordinators in order to develop connected learning within the school (where appropriate).
- Teacher observation takes place through PRSD/Classroom Observations.
- Individual teacher's expertise is deployed where necessary.
- W.A.L.T Boards are used in classrooms where learning intentions are shared with the whole class (where appropriate).
- Foundation Stage and Key Stage One Teachers use a visual timetable where appropriate.

In Carrick, we make use of:

- Shared, modelled and guided teaching;
- Discussion and questioning (open and closed as appropriate);
- Recognising and celebrating occasions when students make better progress than expected;
- Previewing and reviewing work;
- Didactic teaching;
- Extra curricular activities;
- Interactive Whiteboard teaching;
- Designing and making things;
- Talking and listening;
- Role play/Hot seating/Debating;
- Appropriate support for children with special educational needs and/or health needs;
- Promoting self-esteem;
- Planning Boards;
- Thinking time;
- Providing opportunities for reflection by pupils and by teachers;
- Self-Evaluation;

- Demonstrating high expectations;
- Engaging parents;
- Previous learning/prior knowledge;
- Providing opportunities for repetition/reinforcement/consolidation;
- Providing encouragement, positive reinforcement and praise;
- Making judgements and responding to individual and/or group needs;
- Intervening, as appropriate, in the learning process in order to encourage/facilitate development;
- Cross curricular topic work;
- Providing all children with opportunities for success;
- Positive language;
- Using a range of communication strategies – verbal and non-verbal;
- Clear expectations;
- Assessment for Learning techniques;
- Risk taking;
- Practical activities/active learning;
- Assessment (Summative and Formative);
- Class and home tasks/activities;
- Exploring, investigating and problem solving;
- ICT (Computers, IWB, microphones, cameras, ICT devices);
- Fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- Visitors to school or class;
- Participation in physical activity; and
- Reflection on what has been learned.

Our teaching and learning strategies demonstrate a balance in terms of individual, group and whole class work. Advice and support are available from subject co-ordinators and also in the form of visitors or EA personnel. The Learning Support Teacher and the P1-P3 teachers provide extra support for pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Teaching and Learning Policy

The Leadership Team and the Governors will ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is carefully monitored and that the outcomes of the monitoring, will serve as a basis for action and for further evaluation. They will also ensure that an agreed school policy on assessment is implemented, that formal and informal assessment is undertaken as a normal part of teaching and that information from assessment procedures is used to influence learning and teaching strategies and future planning. The Principal and subject/area co-ordinators monitor samples of children's books in Literacy, Numeracy and WAU. The Principal, coordinators and teachers observe lessons as part of the PRSD/Sharing Good Practice Projects.

Formal and informal monitoring procedures include:

- Book Scoops;
- IEPs;

- Pupil Feedback;
- Children's Books;
- Annual Reports;
- Feedback from parents, children and colleagues;
- Teachers' /Classroom Assistants'/ Pupils' and Parents' evaluations;
- Assessment Manager/ Benchmarking/Tracking Data;
- PRSD;
- Self-Evaluation Work;
- Classroom Observations;
- Target Setting;
- Teachers' Planning Documents; and
- Displays.

Role of Parents

In Carrick Primary School we recognise the important role parents play in the education of their children and believe that parents should have access to detailed information about their child's progress at school.

Good communication between parents and teachers is an important feature of the partnership ethos which exists in Carrick Primary School. We welcome the opportunity to talk to and listen to parents as a means of supporting and helping children to reach their full potential, academically and personally.

We inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- Parent-teacher meetings;
- Parents' evenings to explain our school strategies for teaching Literacy and Numeracy;
- Meeting for new Primary One pupils and parents;
- Sending information to parents in relation to policies and procedures;
- Sending annual reports to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can improve further;
- Distributing school newsletters;
- School Website
- Displaying pupils' work;
- Involving parents each term in the target setting process for IEPs;
- Asking parents to check homework and to sign the homework diaries and reading diaries; and
- Seeking the views of parents in relation to School Development Planning, school policies, procedures and school related issues.

We believe parents have a responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We ask parents 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;
- Do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- Inform the school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance and/or behaviour at school; and
- Promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general.

Pupils' Responses

Children will be encouraged to:

- Work to an appropriately high standard;
- To persevere with their tasks;
- To present their work well and take pride in it;
- To show enjoyment in their learning and achievements;
- To be able to suggest follow-on activities;
- To talk with knowledge and understanding about what they are doing;
- To apply what they have learned to unfamiliar situations;
- To show initiative and confidence in selecting and using appropriate resources in an effective way; and
- To become increasingly independent in their use of equipment, materials and ICT.

Gifted and Talented Children

In Carrick we are committed to maximizing the potential of all children, including gifted and talented children. In the case of gifted children, appropriate extension work will be provided so that the children are being appropriately challenged in school and at home.

Staff Development

We will ensure time and resources are allocated to staff development, which will include:

- Whole school InSET;
- Individual InSET;
- Evaluation of InSET;
- Informal staff development;
- Meetings;
- Sharing Good Practice Project;
- Visitors to school; and
- PRSD/Classroom Observations.

All our teachers reflect on their teaching and plan their professional development needs accordingly. Teachers are supported in the development of their skills, and are encouraged to monitor, evaluate and improve upon their practice. We conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all.

Homework

We believe that homework is an integral and co-ordinated element in the school's policies and practices. Homework tasks are varied, useful and differentiated where appropriate. The demands made on the pupils' time are monitored. We use homework effectively to:

- Share expectations;
- Reinforce and extend classroom work;
- Involve parents;
- Encourage home-school based relationships; and
- Develop independent learning skills.

Role of Governors

Our Governors determine, support, monitor and review the school's Teaching and Learning Policy. In particular they:

- Support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
- Monitor how effective the teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment and raising standards;
- Ensure that the Performance Review and Staff Development Policy promotes good quality teaching and encourages improvements in teaching and learning;
- Ensure that school buildings and premises are appropriate in terms of supporting successful teaching and learning;
- Monitor teaching strategies in light of health and safety regulations; and
- Monitor the effectiveness of the Teaching and Learning Policy through the school's self-evaluation processes.

Differentiation

Teachers differentiate the curriculum by:

- Task;
- Outcome; and
- Provision of teacher/adult support.

Differentiation is viewed as an on-going process which helps to meet the needs of individual children in our school. It can help the children to make at least their expected progress in relation to their capabilities. It can be achieved by the nature of the task, the nature of the resources used and/or by the nature of the outcome.

Special Educational Needs

When planning work for children with Special Educational Needs we give due regard to information and targets contained within the children's IEPs and previous review outcomes. The Learning Support Teacher and P1-3 teachers support children with Special Educational Needs (where appropriate) who are at Stage 2 to Stage 5 of the Code of Practice. The children who avail of this support experience a mixture of withdrawal support and team teaching.

When meeting the needs of children with special educational needs, we use the following strategies:

- Early intervention;
- Collection and recording information;
- Assessment diagnosis;
- IEPs;
- Steps outlined to achieve targets;
- Teachers working with classroom assistants, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, Learning Support Teacher, support teachers, parents and external agencies (where appropriate);
- Knowledge of child's interests, strengths and/or weaknesses;
- Knowledge of previous learning and experiences;
- Ensuring that children experience success;
- Suitability of materials used;
- Raising self-esteem of children; and
- Highlighting ability and potential.

Record-Keeping and Assessment

Regular assessments are made of pupils' work in order to establish the level of attainment, and to inform future planning. Record-keeping and assessment procedures are detailed in the School's Assessment Policy.

Assessment

Assessment is used to measure learning and to help to diagnose pupils' needs. It is used as a tool for learning and as a tool of learning. Children are encouraged to play an active role in relation to assessment and to work with the teacher to determine what has been learned, what is still to be learned and what is the most effective way to learn it.

Within Carrick, teachers use a variety of standardised and diagnostic tests to help them to monitor children's progress and to highlight achievements and underachievements. Internal summative assessments are carried out on a half termly basis in Primary 1-7 classes and parents are provided with information about the child's achievements in these assessments. Individual targets are set for children who have special educational needs and these targets are reviewed on a termly basis.

The Assessment Co-ordinator and Principal collate and monitor the half-termly test results from P1-P7. The Data Team's primary purpose is to collate and analyse the data yielded from a range of assessments and to ensure that the data is used effectively. Teachers are actively encouraged to use the outcomes of all the assessments to inform future planning.

Within Carrick, the pupils' written work is regularly and consistently marked accordance with school's Marking for Improvement Policy.

Language and Literacy

Our language curriculum is designed to encourage and to provide all children with the opportunity to read fluently, write imaginatively and neatly in a grammatically correct manner, spell correctly and develop good speaking and listening skills. We approach the teaching of reading using a variety of methods. From an early age the children are taught phonics and word building skills. Opportunities are also given to increase their vocabulary by borrowing and reading a wide variety of books from school. In Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, parents are strongly encouraged to support their child's reading, and guidance is given by the teacher in a reading diary which is sent home. The older children are taught to develop wider reading competencies through topic research, library reference skills and independent reading.

Writing ability is promoted by providing opportunities for self expression, as well as by teaching specific grammatical text, spelling techniques and correct letter formation and handwriting skills. The phonics programme is also used to help develop children's spelling techniques.

Additionally, the children are introduced to different forms of literature and poetry and we encourage the development of speaking and listening skills through discussion, debate and drama.

Using Mathematics

The work in Mathematics is based upon the National Curriculum. During the Foundation Stage much of the work involves practical tasks, games and activities to develop the children's understanding that Mathematics is involved with real things and part of the real world.

As children progress through the school they will be given more demanding challenges according to their level of ability.

Mental Mathematical skills and the ability to solve problems are given particular importance within the Mathematics Curriculum.

We are always keen that children are encouraged at home to develop their skills and any efforts made to encourage and develop these areas will be of great benefit to the children's progress. Mathematics is also one of the areas in which children will be expected to carry out regular homework tasks and again parental support and encouragement with the completion of these tasks will be very beneficial.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

In Carrick we believe that ICT has the potential to transform and enrich pupil' learning experiences and environments. We also believe that it can empower pupils, develop self-esteem and promote positive attitudes to learning. Additionally, the creative use of ICT has the potential to improve pupils' thinking skills, providing them with opportunities to become independent, self-motivated and flexible learners.

Pupils will develop the skills of using ICT by engaging in meaningful research and purposeful activities set in relevant contexts. They will use ICT to handle and communicate information, solve problems, pose questions and take risks and will process, present and exchange their ideas.

In Carrick we are aiming for:

- More connected knowledge – of things, people, action;
- Wider range of skills and strategies;
- Increased engagement and motivation;
- More positive emotions about and a greater affiliation of learning;
- A sense of membership and participation in a learning community;
- A greater facility for interacting and learning with others;
- The promotion of oneself as a 'longlife' learner; and
- The fun, sense of achievement and sheer enjoyment that learning brings.

Review of Teaching and Learning Policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years, taking into account new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, technological developments, resource developments and/or changes to the physical environment of the school.

Signed: Mrs Anne Cassidy (Principal)

Signed: Mr Michael Keenan (Chairperson of Board of Governors)

(Date): 16th May 2016