

Teaching and Learning Policy



ST. EITHNES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Up-dated September 2111

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At St. Eithne's Primary School we aim to ensure that the children at our school are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to a consistently high level of pupil achievement.

We believe that every child is an individual and that they will learn through a range of different teaching /learning strategies and experiences.

This short policy is a guide to what our children do; what our teachers do and how time is managed.

It is also a guide to the organisation in the classroom and what the school as an organisation does to create an effective and well-managed learning environment, in which the individual needs of each child, can be met.

What makes St. Eithne's?

- *At St. Eithne's Primary School we aim to be friendly, welcoming and approachable.*
- *We strive to provide a safe and healthy environment.*
- *Staff, parents and pupils are a TEAM with the main aim of helping our pupils achieve their potential.*
- *Teachers and non-teaching staff in partnership with parents provide the best learning ingredients possible.*
- *All teachers with the help of parent volunteers provide an extensive extra-curricular programme for our pupils, giving them that extra social and physical arena to develop fully in more than just academic pursuits.*
- *At St. Eithne's we care for our pupils' welfare, education and development.*

Teaching and Learning at St. Eithne's

Our agreed beliefs about learning

At St. Eithne's we believe that learning takes place:

- ◆ When children are happy, interested and motivated in a well-organised, calm and stimulating environment where clear and manageable objectives are set.
- ◆ The tasks set match their ability, challenge and stimulate them and allow them some independence to take charge of their own learning.
- ◆ Where preparation, planning and evaluation are a major part of the educating/learning process for the benefit of both educator and learner.
- ◆ When children are provided with interesting and appropriate stimuli and the learning tasks set are challenging enough to be of benefit.
- ◆ When our children are active participants in their own learning their individual contributions are valued.
- ◆ When the approach/ strategies of the educator are varied and take account of the interest and different ways each individual pupil learns.

Teaching Strategies

At St. Eithne's we are committed to a variety of teaching strategies for the benefit of all pupils at the school.

- ◆ A good balance of individual, group and whole-class teaching is employed.
- ◆ A good mix of practical, investigational and problem solving activities balanced with the consolidation and practice of fundamental skills and routines are used.
- ◆ The classroom environment & resources, including classroom assistants and/or volunteers, are organised to their fullest extent in the learning process.
- ◆ Marking and assessment procedures are used as an aid to planning, preparing and deciding on the appropriate strategies necessary.
- ◆ Differences in the way all pupils learn and their different levels of ability and progress are taken into account, allowing pupils of all abilities to work at their own level.
- ◆ A wide range of opportunities for pupils to use up-to-date tools and ICT resources.
- ◆ Opportunities for pupils to attain effective ICT skills and capabilities through the effective teaching and learning delivered by well trained teachers and teaching assistants;
- ◆ Staff development practices in the school are built primarily around the needs of the pupils, school and staff.
- ◆ Pupils are allowed to take some responsibility in their own learning by allowing them to choose methods of research and recording and by allowing them some involvement in their own assessment.
- ◆ New strategies are ever present and teachers are open to adopting such methods.
- ◆ The introduction of PRSD has strengthened our practices in whole school self-evaluation and critical self assessment by individual teachers. Classroom observation has served to strengthen these self-evaluation strategies for the benefit of both teachers and pupils.
- ◆ Classroom assistants at St. Eithne's are deployed to cover many areas from helping teachers to prepare lesson resources to working with groups or individual pupils.

Our Learning Environment

We aim to make our school itself a modern, interesting, stimulating learning environment for our pupils and staff.

In class we aim to ensure that we organise and use our resources for the benefit of teaching and learning.

Use and arrangement of Resources.

In class:

Our children are given choices to choose appropriate resources.

Classes/ year groups have shared centralized resources.

Each class has well labelled in trays / resources which are easily located and easily replaced.

Children have only restricted access to certain expensive resources.

Furniture is positioned so that all children can see whiteboard, screen and other visual aids clearly.

Timetables are evident which give pupils the opportunity to plan for P.E., Art, Library and other class learning activities.

Subject Co-ordinators make an updated inventory of resources available to teachers each year and our children are taught to take care of resources.

Around the School:

Resource Areas outside each set of four classrooms provide extra class teaching space for groups, whole class and twinned class activities. These areas are also used for centralised resources in all areas of the curriculum. Care of these resources and materials is the responsibility of all pupils and staff. However, they are arranged, maintained and made accessible by the responsible Co-ordinators.

It is the duty of all staff to make sure that corridor/resource area displays are kept up to date.

Main Resources like the Hall, the library and the outside play areas are used to the fullest extent.

These are timetabled and teachers make the best possible use of them to enhance the education of their pupils.

The school is extremely well resourced. There is an ordinary video camera, a digital video camera, 3 digital stills cameras a number of scanners, 2 roamers, at least 30 beebots and a number of maths/geography safari machines. In all there are around 23 pupil laptops and 23 laptops for teacher use and two presentation projectors. There is at least one television and one video recorder available for each resource area. This allows teachers to share and plan well ahead for their use. Overhead projectors and screens are available. However, the interactive whiteboards and ceiling projectors have made this requirement slightly obsolete. Every class has a networked computer and a standalone computer. There is a cluster of 28-networked computers beside the office and classes are timetabled for its use. There is also at least one networked computer in each resource area enabling different groups of pupils the opportunity to produce work for class work. Two classes have Activslates.

In 2005 our first interactive white board was introduced to the special needs area of the school.

The number of interactive whiteboards will be gradually increased as part of our school development plan to enhance learning throughout the whole school.

Over the years we have built an extensive amount of equipment for school presentations. We have our own mobile staging units, an excellent set of stage lights, curtains and sound system. This continues to grow each year as we develop our school show expertise.

Display in class and around the school.

At St. Eithne's we as teachers believe it is **important** that we show pupils that we value their work. Teachers are responsible for changing their classroom displays regularly. Timetabling for corridor display is co-ordinated by the Art & Design Co-ordinator.

We are committed to displaying work, which is well presented, and the best effort of the children providing the work. This work may be displayed in good copybooks, in portfolios and on classroom/corridor walls.

We wish to encourage our children to become accustomed to taking care in the way they present their work and to regard its appearance as an **important** aspect of the completed product.

Displaying pupils work can help us to promote in our pupils good self-esteem and a sense of the importance of always doing their best.

Display in the school will be used to create an attractive and stimulating environment. The work displayed should be of a high standard using both 2D and 3D in a variety of media and be changed frequently. It should include work on different aspects of the curriculum and reflect the individual child's efforts as well as ability. Ideally, Mathematics and Science displays should stimulate discussion and be accompanied by children's questions and answers. Sometimes they can be 'interactive'.

Our policy and guidance on display can be found in our Miscellaneous Policies Document.

Pupils' Achievement

We value all our pupils and aim to highlight all social, physical, creative and academic achievements in the school by including each and every child in some way or other. These achievements are celebrated in many ways as an on going process in all aspects of school life.

We are committed to highlighting the positive nature of children's behaviour and achievements.

Each class has a reward system through which all children are rewarded for the good they do.

Underachievement can sometimes foster a low self-esteem in children. We, however aim to reward all hard work and effort despite any academic difficulties that some children might experience.

Verbal or written praise by teachers, peers, Principal and parents is encouraged. Display of pupils' work and the awarding of stickers and stars are all part of our system of encouraging self-esteem and raising work standards.

A whole School Merit system is in place at present. Pupils are rewarded at the end of each term for behaviour and hard work.

These rewards are as follows.: -

- ◆ Pupil of the month/ Pupil of the Term.
- ◆ Writer of the month,
- ◆ Poet of the month,
- ◆ Artist of the month.
- ◆ Mathematician of the Month
- ◆ ICT Pupil of the Month

Attendance is also valued and certificates are awarded at the end of every term and every year for those pupils who have not missed a single day.

Routines and Rules

Routines and rules in the classroom contribute to a healthy learning environment. Health and Safety are paramount. The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy, a policy on supervision of pupils in line and a simple list of school rules which guide all for the benefit of all so that learning can be achieved effectively.

To be effective these will be:

- discussed with the children to be taught and clearly understood;
- fair, consistent, realistic and positive;

Our school rules are simple to understand and essential to the smooth running of the school. Tied in with our aims these rules are being devised for the benefit of all our children. We have established three main, easy to understand rules, which encompass all smaller and more specific rules/routines. These are:

- Always behave courteously showing good manners and consideration for others;
- Always show respect for your own property as well as the property of others;
- No bullying, no fighting and no rough play in the school at any time.

School Organisation and Management

General roles and responsibilities.

We believe that all adult members of the school community have a responsible part to play in implementing and maintaining an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning at St. Eithne's. The Board of Governors have the ultimate responsibility of managing the school and making sure that financial and curriculum provision is adequate and appropriate. Teachers are responsible for delivering a challenging and suitable level of teaching and learning experiences in line with the N.I. Programmes of study. Non-teaching staff members are also duty bound to assist in their own important way by providing a service whether administrative or supportive. Parents too fulfil an essential role by offering support at home and at school in many voluntary ways.

Management & Organisational Structures.

All members of the school community are essential to the teaching and learning process. The school management structure depends on a management system headed by the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors are ultimately responsible for the management of the school. The everyday running of the school is the responsibility of the principal. After consultation with the School Management Team, the subject Co-ordinators and the staff the principal may recommend routines, policies and procedures to the Board of Governors.

At present the School Management Team is made up of a Principal, Vice-principal, and teachers with major management responsibilities.

Contributions from all staff are welcomed and a team approach to the consultation and decision-making process needed to run the school is applied throughout the school. All staff are given the opportunity to contribute to the decision making process by becoming useful members of teams.

Our pupils may be given an opportunity to contribute especially our primary seven children.

Parents are also afforded some input as the PSO (Parents' Support Organisation) may be involved in a number of different activities in the school.

Below is the most up-to-date structure of responsibilities.

<u>Principal.</u> Whole School Management, Financial Planning, School Ethos, Development Planning & Inset Programme Behaviour/Discipline			
<u>Vice-Principal</u> (Mrs L. Mc Cusker) Whole School Assessment & Curriculum Co-ordinator Child Protection Designated Teacher, Home Liaison Responsible for Classroom Assistants MT Member		TA3 SENCO & Music Co-ordinator (Mr. N. Gormley) Whole School Music Extended Schools Programme MT Member	
TA 2			
Literacy Co-ordinator. (Mrs J. Doherty) MT Member		Numeracy Co-ordinator (Miss D. Coyle) MT Member	
Pastoral Co-ordinator (Mr V. Feeney) Religious Education/PDMU MT Member	ICT & AV Resources Co-ordinator (Mr. J. Meehan) MT Member	World Around Us Co-ordinator (Mrs. F. Mc Clean)	Art & Design Co-ordinator. & P.E Co-ordinator. (Temp.) (Mrs. J. Coyle)
TA1			
KS1 Literacy Co-ordinator. (Mrs. J. Porter)	Art & Design Co-ordinator.	Early Years Co-ordinator. (Mrs. M. Dunne)	

The structure above only specifies those basic roles and responsibilities of the post holders. Not written are the many other tasks and responsibilities undertaken by teachers which combine to make the school an efficient and caring place for pupils, parents and staff members.

General Classroom Management

Our agreed format for planning takes account of the way children learn. This is evident in the way we organise our time, how we plan our lessons and the collaboration between staff members within the school.

Time Management

All teaching and learning activities are well planned so that each child is working at their correct level they begin promptly and the initial pace is maintained. At the beginning of each year each teacher devises a timetable based on agreed specified times for teaching different areas of the curriculum (Refer to earlier pages of the Teachers' Handbook). Children are aware from week to week when they will be covering different areas of the curriculum so that they are well prepared. This is achieved through good start / finish to each lesson and good working documents i.e., schemes, planners, notes etc.

Planning and Preparation.

Efficient planning and classroom organisation significantly reduces time-wasting activities. Teachers plan all activities by collaborating with other members of the year group. This is done for at least half an hour every Monday during directed time.

Lessons are well planned when teachers consider what they are going to teach, how they are going to teach it and what resources they need.

At St. Eithne's teachers plan by producing six week planners which have been created in collaboration from schemes created from the "N.I. Programmes of Study" and the expertise of the present staff in the school.

I.E.P's (Individual Education Plans) for children on Stages 2 to 5 of the Code of Practice are drawn up by class teachers in collaboration with the Senco.

Each individual teacher produces weekly notes, but in collaboration with teachers in the same year group on a Monday of each week.

Weekly notes or daily planners are sent to the office every Friday as part of the monitoring system for the principal. Six-week planners are collected by Co-ordinators who give feedback to the teachers.

Teachers have over the last year been using word processing to place their planners on disc. This will allow future staff to access ready-made plans and adjust them to the class being taught.

Supply Teachers

Teachers may attend courses from time to time and because of this, supply teachers are needed. To ensure continuity, teachers should leave written guidance and suggested activities for all planned absences from the classroom. In the event of an unplanned absence a telephone call should be made to the supply teacher to discuss the children's work. The teacher's planning book will always be available showing lesson plans, timetables and curriculum documents.

School Policies

A list of school policies is set out at the end of our staff handbook and each teacher has a folder containing all policies and a file containing school schemes. It is the duty of each teacher to be familiar with school policies and schemes and to apply them.

These policies and schemes are always available on the school computer network in a folder which can be accessed by staff.

Voluntary Helpers/ Student Teachers etc.

Voluntary helpers, student teachers trainees and pupils from other schools on work placement. Such helpers are a valuable resource and we should welcome their involvement in the classroom. They can help in many ways across the whole curriculum. Help can be on a regular basis or for a specific event. In all cases it is very important that the teacher should take the time to ensure that the volunteer fully understands and is well prepared for the activity in which he or she is involved. Volunteers should be made to feel welcome in the school and if numbers permit should be offered refreshment from the staff room at break times.

Equal Opportunities

All children have the right to equal opportunities. Teachers' expectations of behaviour and performance by all children should be the same. Groups, lines and all activities should be mixed where possible. Particular care should be taken in the areas of Science, Mathematics, Technology and Physical activities. Teachers must ensure that the same children do not dominate group work,

especially when using the computer. All activities, including extra curricular activities at St. Eithne's Primary School are open to all children from P.4 to 7.

Record Keeping

All teachers keep detailed records of their work with the class and of individual children's activities and progress. The school has a policy for the planning, assessment, recording and reporting pupils' achievements, which must be adhered to. Other records are left to the teacher's professional discretion.

Resource Finance

Curriculum areas are allocated money according to the needs identified in the School Development Plan and the accompanying School Budget Plan. The Principal and Co-ordinators discuss resource needs at the beginning of each year and closer to requisition time in the middle term. Requests for all equipment should be made to the Principal. Teachers should be mindful of the value and usefulness of resources they wish to purchase.

Other Information. Further information can be acquired from the Staff Booklet, the School Prospectus and other publications available on the Schemes/policies folder in the teachers' information section of the network.

Please note the staff booklet is a very practical guide to all that is current in the year. It is kept in the shared folder and is regularly updated.

A number of policies which are relevant to parents and other members of the school community can be accessed on our website at www.steithnes.net.