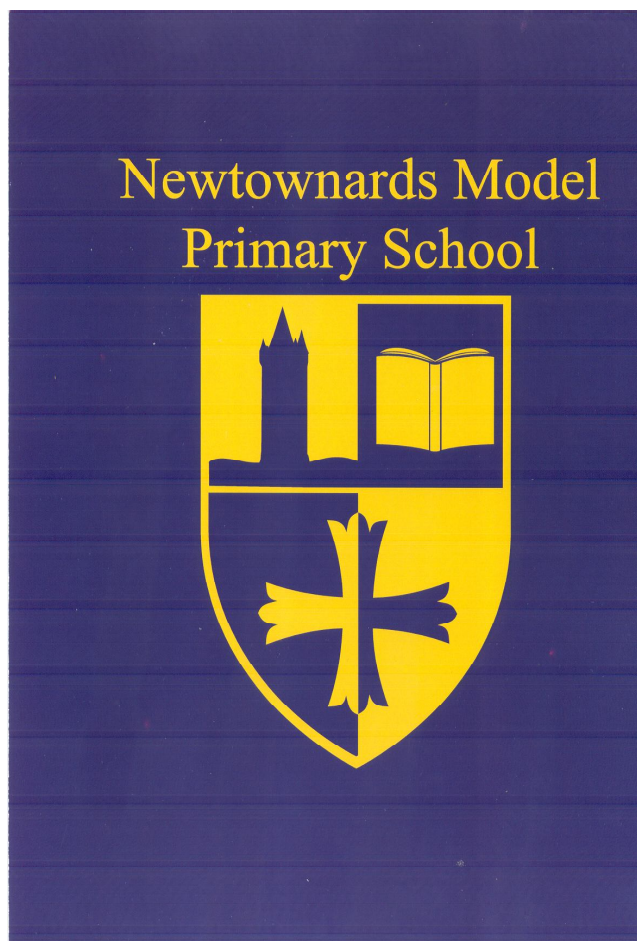# NEWTOWNARDS MODEL PRIMARY SCHOOL

TEACHING & LEARNING POLICY

February 2017

1 Introduction – What is Teaching and Learning?

Teaching and Learning is at the heart of Newtownards Model Primary School. It is the method through which we offer a curriculum that is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Teaching and learning takes place within a whole school context and beyond school boundaries into the community.

2 Aims of the Curriculum

To promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils at the school and thereby society.
To prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

These general aims might be more specifically expanded as follows -
To help children:
- Become independent, literate, numerate and confident.
- Acquire knowledge, skills and practical abilities and above all the will to use them.
- Develop a reasoned set of attitudes, values and beliefs.
- Be encouraged to live in accordance with accepted moral and social standards.
- Develop a healthy lifestyle and a range of physical skills.
- Develop interests and skills which will enable them to enjoy and make the best use of leisure time. Appreciate the intrinsic value of sport and exercise.
- Develop a sense of self-respect with the capacity to live both as independent, self-motivated and self-disciplined adults and as contributory members of co-operative groups among which the family is particularly important.
- Understand the multicultural nature of society; to foster respect for those with different religions, beliefs and ways of life and develop tolerance.
- Appreciate achievements in Art, Music and Literature and to develop aesthetic awareness having been exposed to aesthetic opportunities.
- To develop lively enquiring, imaginative and creative minds with the ability to question and argue rationally.
- Develop their natural curiosity and enthusiasm for learning; to help them learn perseverance and pride in their work as they strive to achieve their highest possible standards.
- Become well mannered, responsible, reflective, respectful, compassionate and proud of their school.

3 Principles of Teaching and Learning

3.1 Teaching and Learning
- Providing a challenging and stimulating programme of study designed to enable all children to reach the highest standards of personal achievement.
- Recognising and being constantly aware of the needs of each individual child.
- Ensuring that learning is progressive and continuous.
- Being good role models – punctual, well prepared and organised.
- Maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and methods of assessment.
- Staff having a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise through INSET and school based activity.

- Working collaboratively with a shared philosophy and commonality of practice.

3.2 Learning
  3.2.1 We recognise that children learn in different ways:
  - The Visual learner who learns best by storing a series of images in his/her brain. These learners respond well to the written word, diagrams, pictures, videos, wall charts and posters.
  - The auditory learner who learns best through sound. These learners respond well to the spoken word, audiotapes, discussion and sound effects.
  - The Kinaesthetic learner who learns best through movement and touch. These learners respond well to movement, hands-on activities, designing and creative activities and role play/drama.

  3.2.2 We adhere to a set of values which we believe underpin learning.
      We believe that:
  - All children can learn.
  - Children learn effectively when they integrate experience, imagination, information and application.
  - Children can and do learn from each other.
  - Children's learning can be improved by them developing an awareness of their own learning style and learning processes.
  - Children need to be motivated to learn.
  - Children need to talk about their learning and receive feedback on the progress they are making.

4 The Role of Members of the School Community

4.1 We see teaching and learning as a process of co-operative teamwork. We welcome and encourage the involvement of parents and others in the community.

We encourage all members of the school community to work towards the school's aims by:
- Fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community.
- Providing a well-ordered environment in which all are aware of behavioural expectations.
- Offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life and recognising the importance of different cultures.
- Encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviours and work.
- Working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another.

4.2 We encourage pupils to work towards the school's aims by:
- Coming to school in good health and maintained by adequate diet, exercise and sleep.
- Attending school regularly and on time.
- Following the school's behaviour code.
- Being increasingly more organised as they progress through the school, eg bring PE kit, taking home letters and messages, returning reading books.

- Taking increasing responsibility for their own learning.

4.3 We encourage Parents/Carers to work towards the school's aims by:
- Ensuring that their child(ren) attends school in good health and with an acceptable standard of personal hygiene.
- Ensuring that their child(ren) attends school regularly and punctually avoiding term time holidays.
- Ensuring that their child is dressed in school uniform, and has PE Uniform and suitable outdoor protection for playtimes.
- Being realistic about their child's abilities and participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainment.
- Contacting school as early as possible to discuss matters affecting their child's happiness, progress and behaviour.
- Supporting their child in his/her learning, giving due importance to homework, hearing reading, and assisting in learning of tables and spellings.
- Providing support for both the discipline within the school and for the teacher's role.
- Showing respect for the moral principles on which the school is based.

4.4 Governors work towards the school's aims by:
- Fulfilling their statutory duties and contributing towards orderly and effective school management.
- Maintaining an appropriate overview of the school's organisation and curriculum.
- Supporting members of the school community.
- Taking an interest in school activities and showing commitment and support.

5 Strategies for Teaching and Learning

5.1 Planning
We have an agreed format for planning which takes into account how children learn.
In our planning:
- There will be clearly defined learning outcomes.
- Tasks will be relevant to achieving these outcomes.
- There will be differentiation by task or outcome to allow pupils to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.
- We will use relevant resources to bring about these outcomes.
- We will have clear structures to lessons.
- We hope to develop a stimulating learning environment in all our classrooms.
- We will take into account the range of intelligence of our children.
- We will take account of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic approaches to learning.
- We will build in monitoring and evaluating.
- We will give feedback to our pupils – both written and verbal.
- We will ask pupils to reflect on what they have learned.

5.2 Teaching approaches
In order to provide an environment where quality teaching and learning experiences are nurtured we will adopt teaching styles that are:
- Stimulating.
- Appropriate and relevant to each child's needs.
- Challenging and which will encourage holistic individual development.

The different teaching approaches currently used within the school:
- Practical activities.
- Investigative activities/research.
- Group discussion.
- Questioning – with children setting their own questions and teachers asking those of an open-ended nature.
- Individual/group/whole class teaching.
- Multi-media/multi-sensory approaches.
- Topic based/cross curricular approaches.
- Exposition and explanation.
- Team teaching.
- Field trips/educational trips.
- Debating.

Classrooms may be organised in a variety of ways which will help promote the independent learner; these will include individual, pair, group and whole class situations. Groups may be formed in numerous ways depending on the nature of the task. They may be mixed ability groups, mixed gender groups, single gender groups, friendship groups and teacher directed groups.

5.3 Assessment:
Our strategies for Assessment:
- Observation – watching the children on task.
- Questioning/discussion with children.
- Audio taping/photographing work in progress.
- Marking children's work according to policy.
- Teacher devised tests.
- Statutory formal assessments, such as end of Key Stage Assessment.
- Standardised tests – GL English and Maths.
- Self assessment.

Planning for Assessment:
- Progression from previous work or subject area.
- Identification of learning outcomes through planning.
- Completion of children's work.
- Evaluation of lesson/topic.
- Assessment of outcomes using strategies outlined previously.
- Recording of assessments.
- Using assessments and evaluations to modify original planning where required.

5.4 Support Staff
Support staff working with class teachers are used to support children's learning in a number of ways. These may include:
- Working directly with children in or out of the classroom.
- Working alongside children so that they can interact with what is going on in class.
- Undertaking administrative/practical tasks.

The class teacher plans work for support staff and is responsible for ensuring that the purpose of an activity is clear and any special instructions understood.

5.5 Learning Support
Pupils with learning Difficulties
Information as to how these children are to be identified and ways in which they will be supported is found in the school's Special Needs Policy. It is sufficient to mention the general guidelines. The teacher will work with the classroom assistant, SENCO, parents, medical, psychological and social services where appropriate, in collecting and recording information which may lead to preventative action in the early years. Children who have been identified as having learning difficulties will have education plans which will have short term targets and steps towards achieving these target outlined. The progress of such children will be reviewed regularly through continual teacher assessment and the use of diagnostic tests.

5.6 Homework
We consider homework as a valuable element of the teaching and learning process. Please see the school's homework policy for more details.

6 Strategies for Progress and Continuity

6.1 Policies and schemes of Work
These are formulated by staff and agreed by the governors. School staff are expected to act in line with these in all aspects of their work.

6.2 Role of Subject Co-ordinator
Subject co-ordinators are involved in:
- Leading the formulation of curriculum policies and schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in their subject throughout the school.
- Supporting colleagues in the production of work plans, the implantation of school policy and assessment and recording procedures.
- Monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects and advising the Key Stage leaders and Principal if action is needed.

6.3 Role of Key Stage Co-ordinator
Key Stage co-ordinators are involved in:
- Supporting teachers in each key stage with the production of work plans, implementation of school policy and assessment and recording procedures.
- Monitoring teaching and learning in their Key Stage and advising the Principal of action needed.

6.4 Role of the Leadership Team
The Leadership Team will monitor through:
- All of the above.
- Overview of children's learning at Key Stage and whole school level.

7 Strategies of Use of Resources

In order to develop independent learners we will continue to use and increase the wide variety of resources at our disposal. These include:
Investigative, problem solving and research based tasks using the following resources:

- Books.
- Practical Equipment.
- Videos.
- Digital Camera, Scanner, Microscope, Interactive Whiteboard.
- Computer Software.
- Internet.
- School Grounds.
- Visitors.
- Peers.

It is important to ensure that the materials used are appropriate to the individual needs of the pupils.

8 Monitoring and Evaluating Teaching and Learning

There is a need for schools to monitor and evaluate the teaching, learning and other processes which contribute to enabling the pupils to achieve on a broad range of fronts. A review to such processes might include:

- The quality of the pupils' participation in classroom work.
- The expectations held by the teachers, the pupils and their parents, and how these influence the nature and quality of teaching and learning in the school.
- The school's effectiveness in promoting the pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence.
- The degree to which teaching strategies address the needs of individual pupils, particularly of the more able and the lower attaining.
- The nature, quality and effectiveness of marking procedures.
- The use made of homework as a means of reinforcing concepts and monitoring the quality of learning and teaching.
- The effectiveness of literacy and numeracy teaching across the curriculum.
- The use made of ICT to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.

Areas to be monitored will reflect the priorities in the school's Development Plan.