

MINTLAW PRIMARY SCHOOL



DRAFT

LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

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1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

This Learning and Teaching Policy document is intended to be considered in conjunction with the Curriculum Framework 3-18 for Aberdeenshire which in itself provides clear guidance on the core principles for effective learning, teaching and assessment. This document gives schools a structure to develop the four capacities based on the experiences and outcomes within the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). The Curriculum Framework 3-18 for Aberdeenshire also sets out entitlements which schools and learning communities have a responsibility to provide for every child and young person in Aberdeenshire

The Aberdeenshire Curriculum Framework is itself based on the principles of Building the Curriculum 3, which highlights that the curriculum is the totality of all that is planned for children and young people throughout their education, encompassing:

- Ethos and life of the school as a community
- Curriculum areas and subjects
- Interdisciplinary learning
- Opportunities for personal achievement

The Learning and Teaching Policy must also be considered in light of both Building the Curriculum 4 and 5 and the advice and direction on skills development and on assessment given in these documents.

Curriculum for Excellence

Mintlaw Primary School endorses the aspiration, set out in the suite of “Curriculum for Excellence” documentation, that all children and young people should be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society.

The ability to learn is fundamental in our ever changing world of education, work and leisure. Mintlaw Primary is committed to developing successful learners and providing the highest possible quality of teaching and learning experiences. We recognise that learning takes place in a range of contexts, namely in the home, workplace and wider community, utilising a vast range of resources and media and including online resources. Mintlaw Primary School actively seeks to support and facilitate excellence in learning and teaching through quality partnerships which involve learners, teachers, parents, employers, volunteers, other education providers and the wider community. We recognise the importance of taking account of learners’ prior learning and current progress. Assessment is integral to the learning process and includes feedback on the ongoing and overall progress made by learners. Reflection on both practice and understanding, applying and sharing standards in assessment is central to ongoing improvements in learning and teaching and raising achievement across the school.

Ultimately, Mintlaw Primary School is committed to collaborative working practices and we feel this is essential in promoting successful learning. The creation of a positive learning climate and ethos across the school strengthens a joint working approach, essential if high quality learning and teaching is to take place.

2. SCHOOL AIMS

Mintlaw Primary School is a happy, safe and stimulating place of learning. We encourage our children to: Strive, Succeed and Shine.

Successful Learners

We will strive to:

- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum which challenges and motivates all our learners
- Provide a range of teaching and learning experiences in a creative and innovative environment

Confident Individuals

We will:

- Help our pupils to develop and grow in confidence in a safe and caring environment
- Develop independence, celebrating success and life skills and encourage our pupils towards an active lifestyle

Responsible Citizens

We will:

- Foster a communal sense of pride in our school
- Encourage our pupils to develop respect, knowledge and understanding of their world and culture
- Help our pupils to make informed life choices and decisions and become aware of the wider world

Effective Contributors

We will:

- Provide our learners with varied opportunities to communicate effectively in many different situations

Help them to think critically and develop team skills in many contexts

3. LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY AIMS

a) Curriculum Areas

All staff in Mintlaw Primary School have a responsibility to develop, reinforce and extend learning in the following areas.

- Health and Wellbeing across learning
- Literacy across learning
- Numeracy across learning

It is recognised that the CfE Curriculum Areas need not be curriculum organisers, however we have decided to use these to organise learning. In so doing, contributors to the learning process ensure learning takes place in an organised and consistent way across a broad range of contexts.

The CfE Experiences and Outcomes describe the expectations for learning. Taken together, they sum up national aspirations for every young person: the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes we hope they will develop. In Mintlaw Primary School, staff provide stimulating learning environments for the children to enhance these areas.

The CfE *Building the Curriculum* documentation (1) focuses on the Curriculum Areas, each of which makes its own unique contribution to developing the four capacities. Each does so, both within its own disciplinary contexts and through connections with other areas of learning.

The 8 Curriculum Areas are:

Expressive Arts

The inspiration and power of the arts play a vital role in enabling our children and young people to enhance their creative talent and develop their artistic skills.

Health and Wellbeing

Learning in health and wellbeing ensures that children and young people develop the knowledge, understanding and skills which they need now and in the future.

Languages

English and Literacy - Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum and increases opportunities for the individual in all aspects of life.

Modern Languages - Learning other languages enables children and young people to make connections with different people and their cultures.

Mathematics

Mathematics and Numeracy is important in our everyday life. It equips us with the skills we need to interpret and analyse information, simplify and solve problems, assess risk and make informed decisions.

Religious and Moral Education

Scotland is a diverse nation whose people hold a wide range of beliefs. Religious and moral education enables children and young people to explore the world's major religions and to develop their own beliefs and values.

Social Studies

Through social studies, children and young people develop their understanding of the world by learning about other people and their values.

Sciences

Learning in science develops an interest in, and an understanding of, the living, material and physical world. Collaborative investigative tasks within science develop important skills, which allow young people to become creative, inventive and enterprising adults, in a world where the skills and knowledge of the sciences are needed across all sectors of the economy.

Technologies

Children and young people will develop their creativity and entrepreneurial skills and be encouraged to become innovative and critical designers of the future.

b) Approaches to Learning

We acknowledge that children and young people learn in a variety of ways ensuring all learners benefit from a wide range of teaching approaches, contexts and learning environments. The main approaches to learning we employ are outlined below; these approaches are not mutually exclusive but overlap to enhance the learning experiences of pupils.

As outlined in the CfE *Building the Curriculum 3* document (BtC3), learner entitlements are key to teaching and learning. "Every learner is entitled to personal support to enable them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities that CfE offers". Approaches to learning across Mintlaw Primary School will actively take account of:

- Challenge and Enjoyment
- Breadth
- Progression
- Depth
- Personalisation and Choice
- Coherence
- Relevance

Progressive high quality learning and teaching requires positive interactions between all stakeholders based on the 5 principals of formative assessment;

- clarifying and sharing learning intentions and success criteria
- engineering effective classroom discussion

- quality questioning and learning tasks that elicit evidence of learning
- providing feedback that moves the learner forward
- activating learners as owners of their own learning and activating learners as instructional resources for one another.

Learners are supported in identifying and reflecting upon their learning enabling them to set realistic learning goals. Learners are grouped in appropriate and flexible groupings based, as appropriate, on; interest, experience, attainment, stage and purpose.

Mintlaw Primary School is committed to progressing the following key areas to ensure high quality teaching and learning is maintained.

i. Active Learning

Active learning, engages and challenges learners' thinking using real life and imaginary situations, is promoted across all areas of the curriculum at all stages. Active learning can support learners' development of the four capacities in many ways. Specifically:

- **successful learners** through using their imagination and creativity, tackling new experiences and learning from them, and developing important skills including literacy and numeracy through exploring and investigating while following their own interests
- **confident individuals** through succeeding in their activities, having the satisfaction of a task accomplished, learning about bouncing back from setbacks, and dealing safely with risk
- **responsible citizens** through encountering different ways of seeing the world, learning to share and give and take, learning to respect themselves and others, and taking part in making decisions
- **effective contributors** through interacting together in leading or supporting roles, tackling problems, extending communication skills, taking part in sustained talking and thinking, and respecting the opinions of others.

ii Digital literacy

The effective and creative use of ICT, is key to developing the skills for learning, life and work needed by young people in the modern world. It is therefore vital that this is reflected in the learning and teaching opportunities which we provide. The approaches we use include, but are not limited to: GLOW, safe and responsible use of the internet and games based learning.

iii Creativity

Embedding, creativity ensures we look at familiar things with a fresh eye, examine a problem with an open mind about how it might be solved, and use our imagination and our knowledge to explore new possibilities rather than established approaches. Creativity improves the self-esteem, motivation and achievement of learners. Pupils who are encouraged to think creatively:

- become more interested in discovering things for themselves
- are more open to new ideas and challenges
- are more able to solve problems
- can work well with others
- become more effective learners
- have greater ownership over their learning.

iv Focus on Outdoor Learning

Outdoor Learning has many advantages including the opportunity to explore and discover, and significantly allow for planned and managed “risk taking” to take place. Mentally, physically and emotionally the outdoors is a very different place from the classroom. Planned opportunities for outdoor learning takes place in a number of different contexts including; using the school grounds for both the formal curriculum e.g. taking maths outdoors and more vocational subjects such as developing a school garden. Using the local environment e.g. a Historical walk around Mintlaw or a ranger guided visit to Aden Country Park. Within Aberdeenshire this may involve visits to one of the many historical, cultural or environmental centres e.g., Fyvie Castle. It may also involve learners in residential trips both within and beyond Aberdeenshire.

v Cooperative and collaborative learning

Cooperative and collaborative learning promotes the idea that young people’s learning is best served when they have opportunities to learn with and from each other, and are shown how to do so effectively. We no longer consider that a ‘good’ classroom is necessarily a quiet one; we understand that learning is frequently most effective when learners have the opportunity to think and talk together, to discuss ideas, question, analyse and solve problems, without the constant mediation of the teacher.

C) Learning across the Curriculum

Learning across the curriculum is the responsibility of all in the context of Health and Wellbeing, Literacy and Numeracy. This coupled with the specific themes of Global Citizenship, Enterprise in Education and Financial Education will give our children and young people opportunities to learn about their world and how to be active participants in it through well-planned curricular contexts which underpin the design of the cross sector curriculum in Mintlaw Primary.

The schools across the Mintlaw Cluster will work together to achieve cross-sector collaboration on contexts and themes whilst building the capacity of individual teachers to deliver the innovative disciplinary and interdisciplinary experiences. This is achieved through highly successful STLC meetings.

Depth and application will be achieved through careful planning at centre-level to design a coherent curriculum which takes account of the ethos and life of the school as part of the wider community, stages of transition, partnership–working, personalisation and choice.

In order for our learners to have wide opportunities, Mintlaw Primary School will provide opportunities for staff to:

- Keep abreast of local and national priorities, policies and legislation
- Develop capacity through in-house and further CPD opportunities
- Progress further in building relations with the other sector as a means towards building their own capacity
- Ensure resources are available where and when appropriate to carry out expectations as set out in BtC 3
- Create opportunities to experience outdoor learning in the immediate environment
- Build leadership capacity
- Create opportunities to experience outdoor learning in the immediate environment

Teachers will

- Take responsibility for all curricular areas in order to deliver cross-curricular / interdisciplinary contexts
- Contribute to school and local curricular developments
- Through selection of interdisciplinary themes, allow children and young people opportunities for personalisation, choice and personal target setting and will provide appropriate feedback with opportunities for improvement
- Draw on expertise available in the community to fulfil certain experiences
- Focus on specific outcomes as part of the designed, coherent curriculum
- Will use technologies to advance the problem-solving capacities of the children in all areas of the curriculum
- Will seek advice from those who have the capacity as to the appropriate use of IT in particular
- Will teach problem solving, critical thinking and risk-aware skills to children through contexts appropriate to their development

4. POLICY CONSULTATION PROCESS

Mintlaw Primary welcomes a wide response from all stakeholders. The following will be engaged in the consultation on our learning and teaching policy:

- Teaching and non-teaching staff
- Pupil Council
- Parent Council
- Mintlaw Cluster QIO

This document is intended to be an ongoing working document and guide. We will continue to consult widely with as many individuals and organisations as possible in order to ensure we represent the real views of our staff, pupils and parents in order to ensure the highest possible teaching and learning experiences across the school. This policy will be reviewed and up dated.

5. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Implement changes following consultation process subsequent to completion of Learning and Teaching Policy.
- HT to coordinate familiarisation and implementation across the school
- Involvement of Pupil and Parent Council
- Evaluation of Policy to be carried out on a five yearly basis

6. STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCES

Mintlaw Primary School is committed to supporting the delivery of excellence across the school. Staff will raise issues relating to training needs and resources through:

- School improvement plans
- PDRS meetings
- STLC meetings
- Inset workshops as appropriate

7. POLICY EVALUATION AND REVIEW

In line with school policy, ongoing review of this document will form part of a five-year cycle. The processes outlined in the consultation section will also be used for the monitoring and evaluation of this policy.

It will be made clear to all using this policy that it is not a finished piece but a working document that should be added to, updated and improved as developments in teaching and learning are developed across the school.

8. References

The following is a list of references which have contributed to the thinking behind this policy and may assist teachers in approaches to learning and teaching

Pedagogies

Aifl – The Learning Set
Bloom's Taxonomy
Cognitive Behaviour Approach
Collaborative Learning
De Bono's Thinking Hats
Emotional Intelligence
Learner Responsibility
Learning Styles
Multiple Intelligences
Social Constructivism
ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) Lev Vgotsky

Texts / Papers

From Thinking Skills to Thinking Classrooms Carol McGinness, 1999

Websites

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Building the Curriculum 3 – 18: A Curriculum Framework

www.educationscotland.org.uk

Building the Curriculum 1 - 5