



# MARYKIRK SCHOOL

## LEARNING & TEACHING POLICY



*Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, and their own and other cultures.*

*Article 29*

## Learning and Teaching

### Rationale

**At Marykirk Primary School the children are at the heart of all that we do. In this policy we aim to set out a rationale for how we aim to motivate and engage with our learners and how we ensure that all of our children are supported and challenged to achieve and attain their absolute best.**

*“Learning and teaching is the core business of school and other centres of learning. School must ensure that children and young people have the highest quality learning experiences. A clear focus on outcomes for young people is essential, with lesson and programme planning that helps learners achieve to their fullest extent. These learning and teaching aims lie at the heart of Curriculum for Excellence.”*

*The Journey to Excellence, Education Scotland [www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk](http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk)*

It is with this statement in mind that we utilise every opportunity we have to help children learn and enhance their entire school experience. This policy sets out clear expectations of what children do, what teachers do, how time is managed, the organisation of 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 every child is met.

### Aims and objectives

We believe that people learn best in different ways. At Marykirk we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- Enable children to become successful learners, effective contributors, responsible citizens and confident individuals;
- Foster children’s self esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people; develop children’s self respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others;
- Show respect for all cultures and, in so doing, promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- Enable children to understand, appreciate and learn through their local environment and understand their place in it and help them feel valued as part of the community;
- Help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, familiar and confident with new technologies.

### Effective learning

At Marykirk we realise the need to foster individuals and cater for the needs of all. This, in turn, is reflected in how we plan and deliver all aspects of the curriculum. Children are taught skills appropriate for their age and stage of development which in turn allow them to access a curriculum of experiences and entitlements tailored to

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meet their needs. We are aware of the need to cater for a wide range of abilities in each class and stage and also to allow for differing learning styles such as visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. To this end we believe that children learn best when they are:-

- Enthusiastic & motivated
- Challenged and stimulated
- Clear about learning intentions and success criteria
- Determined
- Able to listen and take on board new ideas
- Independent
- Creative
- Allowed access to new technologies
- Able to justify their thoughts
- Able to apply new knowledge and skills

At every opportunity we encourage all children to accept a certain amount of responsibility for their own learning as this is an important life skill. The children are encouraged to consider their own strengths and identify how they can improve. The children will be involved with peer and self assessment as is appropriate to their stage. All children are expected to achieve their very best, set high yet realistic targets for themselves and they are supported to work at a level that challenges them.

Marykirk School is currently looking to review how pupil profiling is done from Primary 1 to 7. We aim to develop a process that is used consistently through the school whereby the pupils learn how to plan their own learning and reflect on their progress. These critical thinking skills will help them become more independent and life long learners.

### **The Learning Environment**

We believe at Marykirk that every child has the right to work, learn and play in an area that is interesting and stimulating. Every class has wall space where children's work is clearly displayed. This work should celebrate success and achievement and also act as an aide memoire and be a useful learning and teaching tool.

Every class room is equipped to cater for the storage of all tools and equipment that children and teachers would need on a day to day basis. These areas are always clearly labelled and organised in such a way that children will be able to manage themselves and be able to access equipment safely and easily to complete whatever task they are set. Teachers at Marykirk arrange their areas as they see fit and explain clearly to the children, where things are and what they are for at the beginning of every session.

The equipment and resources available to children and teachers should be used to motivate the children and facilitate all learning styles and strategies for working as listed below:-

- Investigation and problem solving;
- Research and finding out;
- Group work;

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- Pair work;
- Independent work;
- Whole class work;
- Asking and answering questions;
- Use of ICT;
- Fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- Creative activities;
- Watching television and responding to musical or tape-recorded material;
- Debates, role plays and oral presentations;
- Designing and making things;
- Participation in athletic or physical activity

## **Learning takes place in an environment which is:**

- Challenging and stimulating;
- Peaceful and calm;
- Happy and organised;
- Well resourced and clearly labelled
- Makes learning accessible;
- Encouraging and appreciative;
- Welcoming;
- Provides equal opportunities;
- Provides a working atmosphere;

We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning and a classroom should promote independent use of resources and high quality work by the children.

## **Effective Teaching**

At Marykirk, teachers use a variety of strategies to deliver A Curriculum for Excellence in tandem with Aberdeenshire's 3-18 Framework Entitlements. We aim to match abilities, preferred learning styles, interests and experiences of the children to their immediate environment. We are striving to develop knowledge, concepts, skills and positive attitudes which form the basis for the four Curriculum for Excellence capacities of :-

- Successful Learners
- Effective Contributors
- Responsible Citizens
- Confident Individuals

Children will be provided with the opportunity to work as individuals , groups and as part of a class to develop their interpersonal skills, self dependency and ability to self and peer monitor both academic and social aspects of their schooling. All of the lessons we plan for have an emphasis on active rather than passive learning and children are always involved in discussing this learning.

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Teachers are responsible for setting the pace of work and ensuring that all children's needs are met. Work in class will be differentiated by ability and children who are able will be extended and challenged and those who find work challenging, for whatever reason, will be supported both by class teacher, the preparation and structure of learning resources and, wherever possible, Pupil Support Assistants.

## **Effective Assessment**

Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching cycles. We undertake assessment that is:

- Well matched to clearly identified purposes and encourages learners
- Emphasises the formative, celebrating what has been achieved and identifying what has still to be achieved to progress.
- An appropriate blend of self, peer and teacher review, both formal and informal
- Provides useful information which is shared with learners, and where appropriate, parents and other agencies.

## **Role of Support for Learning**

The Additional Support for Learning teacher and Pupil Support Assistants play a significant role in supporting the school in all aspects of learning and teaching. Collaboration of planning and teaching aims to meet all pupils' needs.

## **Monitoring and Review of Policy and Practice**

The Learning and Teaching at the school is related to our school aims and our School Development Plan.

We use the Quality Indicators in 'How Good is Our School' to evaluate our learning and teaching. It is reviewed in light of national priorities, findings of Quality Assurance Reports, HMIE Inspections, monitoring and review of practice.

Classroom practice is monitored by the Head Teacher and progress is tracked and monitored by the Head Teacher on a termly basis. This helps to inform us of the effectiveness of our learning and teaching within the school. Teachers undergo on-going self-evaluation to evaluate the effectiveness of their classroom practice.

We review learning and teaching methods to ensure they are still relevant when we are considering our School Policies or auditing aspects of the School Development Plan.