

BELLAGHY PRIMARY SCHOOL



CURRICULUM POLICY

(Teaching and Learning Policy)

(written March 05)

Reviewed by the Board of Governors - October 2009

MISSION STATEMENT of **BELLAGHY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The mission of Bellaghy Primary School is to provide, in partnership with parents, a broad, quality education so that all pupils can reach their full potential within a caring, secure environment which promotes self-discipline, motivation and individuality.

We believe that:

- a working partnership between home, school and community is essential to provide the optimal learning experiences for everyone.
- everyone learns best in a caring environment where individuals are acknowledged, accepted, and respected for their uniqueness.
- every individual needs success to grow.
- children should have an active role in the learning process where risk taking is encouraged and failure is respected as a necessary ingredient of growth.

We aim to:

- ensure that each child's introduction to formal education is a happy and caring experience where enjoyment and success are paramount
- offer a broad, balanced curriculum which is designed to promote the social, educational, physical, moral, cultural and religious development of each child
- help pupils acquire knowledge and basic skills relevant to adult life
- maximize the potential of each individual, to develop self-confidence, self-respect, self-discipline and to promote a spirit of tolerance towards others
- promote a curriculum where a desire to learn is encouraged and where thinking and reasoning skills are stimulated

These general aims might be more specifically expanded as follows:

Most children will:

- be able to communicate orally with confidence and feeling on issues relative to age and ability
- read fluently and accurately with understanding and expression
- write clearly, accurately and with flare and fluency
- achieve satisfactory standards in spelling, syntax, punctuation and use of language
- develop a legible style of hand-writing
- be able to listen attentively and with understanding
- show an ability to acquire information from a variety of sources and to record such information in meaningful and understandable ways
- be able to apply Mathematical ideas and concepts to situations in the home, school and local environment
- demonstrate an understanding of the rules of computation and the ability to apply computational skills with accuracy and speed
- explore the uses of ICT across the curriculum and be aware of its implications in society
- master basic scientific ideas, demonstrating an ability to investigate, analyse and solve problems
- appreciate achievements in Art, Music, Science, Technology and Literature and develop aesthetic awareness
- become aware of some of the geographical, historical and social aspects of our local environment
- develop a reasoned set of attitudes and values
- develop self-discipline and respect for self and others including own and other's property
- acquire a knowledge of Christian beliefs and be able to live in accordance with accepted moral standards
- appreciate the multi-cultural nature of society and foster respect for those with different religions, beliefs and ways of life
- develop fit and healthy bodies, equipped with a range of physical skills
- develop interests and skills which will enable them to enjoy and make good use of leisure time

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF BELLAGHY PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. A happy, respectful and purposeful atmosphere is the foundation to teaching and learning.
2. Every child is of equal worth and every person has something positive and unique to contribute to school life.
3. Each teacher has a responsibility to enable children to fulfil their potential.
4. We will ensure the curriculum taught at Bellaghy Primary School;
 - Is planned around knowledge, skills, concepts, values and attitudes
 - Is well co-ordinated and well planned, using a cross-curricular approach when appropriate
 - Is tailored to suit the ability of individual pupils
 - Builds on the interest and experience of the child
 - Takes account of the need to educate all children so that they understand, accept and respect the two cultures in the Northern Ireland community.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

We believe that children learn best when they:

- Are happy
- Are interested and motivated
- Achieve success
- Are given tasks to match their ability
- Understand the task
- Are confident and feel secure
- Are challenged and stimulated

TEACHING

Teachers value all pupils irrespective of their ability, race, gender, age or ability.

Teachers will:

- Promote effective and positive interaction with pupils
- Promote high expectations
- Plan lessons which have clear learning outcomes which are communicated to the pupils
- Use a range of teaching styles
- Use a range of questioning
- Recognise and manage the support provided by other adults in the room
- Use well timed interventions to help the pupils make good progress
- Ensure that assessment strategies are implemented and records are kept
- Recognise the importance of health and safety
- Acknowledge and make use of parents, the community and work carried out at home.

SKILLS WE AIM TO DEVELOP

We will ensure opportunities arise so that the following skills can be developed:

1. Observation and visual skills
2. Imaginative and creative skills
3. Organisational and study skills
4. Social skills
5. Physical and practical skills
6. Problem solving skills
7. Communication skills
8. Decision making skills
9. Mathematical skills

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We strive to create a learning environment which will be:

- Challenging and stimulating
- Peaceful and calm
- Happy and caring
- Organised
- Well resourced
- Accessible

Displays in our school:

- Create an attractive and stimulating environment
- Include work on different aspects of the curriculum
- Reflect the child's efforts as well as ability

Classroom displays tend to assist children with their learning, while the corridor and hall displays celebrate children's work and achievements.

ORGANISATION OF THE CURRICULUM

The Curriculum at Bellaghy Primary School will aim to meet the statutory requirements of the N.I. Curriculum (1989) in which the five areas of study are:

English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, The Environment and Society, Creative and Expressive Studies.

From these come the compulsory subjects:

English, Maths, Science, Technology and Design, History, Geography, Art and Design, Music, P.E. and R.E.

Four educational themes are also to be included in the Primary Curriculum. These themes are not considered primary subjects but as cross curricular themes. They are:

Education for Mutual Understanding, Cultural Heritage, Health Education and Information Technology.

The curricular emphasis in Bellaghy Primary School will remain with English and Maths. It is our belief that our fundamental aim is to make the children articulate,

literate and numerate and that without the rudiments in these basic subjects, progress in later years will be limited. Thus, reading, writing, talking and listening and Maths form the basis of each child's learning and a Literacy and Numeracy lesson takes place every day.

We envisage the role of Science and Technology to be enlarged in our primary curriculum. While the teaching of Science has always been a feature of our school, the content will be more structured, ensuring progression and continuity.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Consistent with the aim of preparing children for adult life, we endeavour to provide a range of extra-curricular activities. These range from card-making to public speaking to cookery. Youth Sport ensures that our pupils enjoy a wide range of team sports and outdoor pursuits.

PLANNING FOR THE CURRICULUM

Our planning operates on the basis of a six-week cycle. There will be five blocks in the school year approximately of six weeks duration, as follows:

- 1A – September – Hallowe'en
- 1B – Hallowe'en – Christmas
- 2A – Christmas – mid February
- 2B – Mid February – Easter
- 3 – Easter – June

The curriculum for the school year in each subject will be divided into these five blocks. It is each teacher's responsibility to plan his/her programme or scheme for each subject for each class. NB English and Maths are planned for each year group, however, bearing in mind the composite nature of each class, all other areas of the curriculum are planned on a two year rolling programme. While this rolling programme is of a topic-based approach, differentiation is planned for each class.

In addition to six-weekly planners, we have Curriculum Overview planners for Maths, English and Science for P1-P7.

Each teacher also prepares weekly notes based on six-weekly planners.

When planning, each teacher concentrates not only on content, but on specific learning intentions, teaching methods, classroom organisation, resources, assessment, recording and evaluating.

All planning is monitored by the Principal who keeps a file of six-weekly planners and schemes in the school office. These are accessible by any member of staff at any time.

CURRICULUM CO-ORDINATION

Subject co-ordinators are responsible for:

- Maintenance and overview of resources
- Attending relevant courses and informing staff
- Liaising with staff to ensure consistency and progression of scheme
- See appendix A for list of co-ordinators

ASSESSMENT

The purpose of assessment is to enable teachers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils and form the basis for future teaching and learning. Each child will be monitored both formally and informally using a combination of weekly tests, termly tests, standardised tests and continuous assessment. The results of all assessment will be kept in individual assessment folders along with samples of pupil work.

Parents will be informed of their child's progress through twice yearly written reports and twice yearly parent interviews. Parents are welcome to visit the school at any time to discuss their child's progress.

CLASSROOM ORGANISATION & TEACHING STRATEGIES

There are two classes in our school Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. Occasionally and depending on numbers the P4 pupils may form part of the Key Stage Two class.

A variety of teaching strategies are encouraged in our school, including individual, group and whole class teaching. The children will be given the opportunity to co-operate in the classroom. Tasks will be set appropriate to each child's ability.

In Key Stage One, pupils may be under the direction of a classroom assistant. NB The lesson will be planned by the teacher who will brief the classroom assistant prior to the lesson. An alternative venue may be used in this case.

All classrooms should have:-

Tables arranged for:

- Ease of working
- Flexibility
- Purposeful discussion
- Large working surfaces
- Ease of access to resources

Storage/display areas arranged to:

- Support different areas of the curriculum
- Give character to the classroom
- House children's personal belongings

RULES AND ROUTINES

Rules and routines in the classroom contribute to a healthy learning environment. To be effective we believe they should be:

- Clearly understood
- Fair and consistent
- Realistic and positive
- Developed through discussion with the children Ref: 10 Bees of Good Behaviour

RESOURCES

All resources should be well organised, be of good quality, be clean, tidy and accessible. Children should be taught how to access resources, care for equipment, not damage, misuse or waste any resources.

I.C.T.

Computers in each classroom are used to support teaching and learning. Children may work in another classroom if the computer there is available.

STRUCTURED PLAY

Structured play sessions take place in the Key Stage One Resource room. This is a safe environment adjoining the Key Stage One classroom, where children can creatively interact with a variety of settings. This space is adaptable, attractive, inviting, well resourced and stimulating.

DIFFERENTIATION

At every opportunity, teachers will strive to provide learning experiences suited to the needs of each individual pupil. Pupils will be grouped and lessons planned accordingly. NB Differentiation is often dictated by practicalities.

PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

Teachers will strive to pin point physical, emotional, intellectual and social needs and tailor their teaching style to suit these needs. Where possible, children with recognisable learning needs will work alongside children of varying abilities. However, every effort will be made to give individual attention where needed. When appropriate and with advice from the NEELB Psychology Service, pupils with an identified need will be placed on the SEN register and Individual Educational plans will be written if the child is on Stage Two. Where part-time skilled teaching (LTSS) is recommended, this will be utilised to help children in need.

ACHIEVEMENT

Social, physical, creative and academic achievements are celebrated in many ways in all aspects of school life by:

- Verbal or written praise by teachers, peers, Principal and parents
- Displays of work – Time to celebrate notice board
- Opportunities to perform or share
- Encouraging self esteem
- Celebrating achievements in Assembly

ASSEMBLY

As a school we come together for communal worship three times each week. The pattern is as follows:

- Tuesday – Hymn practice – Mrs Torrens
- Wednesday – Visit from local minister
- Friday – Talk by Mrs Richmond

In addition R.E. is taught as a formal lesson once per week.

HOMEWORK

All homework will be a natural continuation of work done in class and will be assigned according to the school's Homework policy. There will be no written homework over the weekend.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

To ensure continuity, teachers leave written guidance and suggested activities for all planned absences from the classroom.

EDUCATION FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Our school continues to link with St John Bosco Primary School, Ballynease and enjoys a variety of in-house days and away days which aim to foster mutual respect between the two communities in N.Ireland.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All children have the right to equal opportunities. Teachers' expectations of behaviour and application by all children should be the same. Teachers must ensure that all children are treated equally.

COMMUNITY LINKS

Our school has a strong community link with a dynamic Parent Support Group. The latter organises a variety of community events each year which are well supported by our school family and by the wider community.

In addition, we use the amenities within our local area e.g. Bellaghy Bawn, Church Island and a local open farm to enhance the teaching and learning experiences enjoyed by our pupils.

CLEANING

Cleaning of our school is carried out by the building supervisor. Nevertheless, everyone is encouraged to take responsibility for the environment both within and around school. WE insist that all areas should be kept tidy and litter free.

SCHOOL POLICIES

School Policies are filed in the staff room. They are accessible by any member of staff at any time. It is each teacher's duty to be familiar with these policies and to apply them.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CURRICULUM POLICY

The Principal will ensure this policy is implemented throughout the school, using strategies such as staff meetings, classroom visits, feed back from parents and monitoring of planning.

This policy will be evaluated and reviewed annually. Any implication relating to issues for review within this policy will be included in the school development plan.

Policy written – March 05 MLR