



# **BALLYORAN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **Learning & Teaching Policy**

**Reviewed April 2026**

## **Our Vision**

To create a welcoming, inclusive school community, where all pupils can flourish and reach their full potential academically, socially and emotionally within a happy, safe and nurturing environment, preparing them to be responsible citizens of the future.

## **What is Teaching and Learning?**

Teaching and Learning is at the heart of Ballyoran 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.

### **1. Aims of the Curriculum**

In Ballyoran Primary School we aim:

1) To develop each child as:

- An individual
- A contributor to society
- A contributor to the economy and environment.

thus enabling each child to develop his or her full potential academically, spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially.

2) To develop the following skills in each child –

- Communication
- Using Mathematics
- Using ICT
- Thinking skills
- Managing information, problem solving and decision-making
- Being creative, working with others and self-management.

3) To foster the following attitudes and values –

- Personal responsibility
- Self-confidence
- Curiosity
- Concern for others
- Flexibility
- Tolerance and respect for others
- Commitment, determination and resourcefulness
- Community spirit
- Integrity
- Independence
- Openness to new ideas.

Ultimately to provide stimulating, relevant and enriching learning experiences with equality of access for each child so as they may develop an enthusiasm for learning as a lifelong process. We aim to do this by delivering a broad and balanced Curriculum in its seven Areas of Learning:

1. The Arts
2. Language & Literacy
3. Mathematics & Numeracy
4. Personal Development & Mutual Understanding
5. Physical Education
6. The World Around Us
7. Religious Education

And by delivering a programme of Extra Curricular Activities for pupils.

## **2 Principles of Teaching and Learning**

### **2.1 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.
- Maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of the NI Curriculum and methods of assessment.
- Staff having a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise through Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and school-based activity.
- Working collaboratively with a shared philosophy and commonality of practice.

### **2.2 Learning**

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.

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.

### 3.The Role of Members of the School Community

- a. 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 life and the importance of different cultures.
- Encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviours and work.
- Working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another.

- b. 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.

- c. We encourage Parents/Carers to work towards the school's aims by:

- Ensuring their child(ren) attends school regularly and punctually avoiding term time holidays.
- 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, reading and assisting in learning of tables and spellings.
- Providing support for both the discipline within the school and for the teacher's role.

- d. Governors work towards the school's aims by:

- Fulfilling their statutory duties and contributing towards orderly, 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.

## 4. Strategies for Teaching and Learning

### a. 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.
- There is a stimulating learning environment in all our classrooms.
- We will take into account the range of ability 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.

### b. Teaching approaches

In order to provide a learning environment that promotes high-quality teaching and learning, the school will implement teaching approaches that are stimulating, developmentally appropriate and responsive to the individual needs of each child. These approaches will provide appropriate levels of challenge and support, ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all learners and promoting their holistic development.

The teaching approaches outlined below are designed to support the development of children's knowledge, skills and personal capabilities, in line with the aims of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Through these approaches, children are encouraged to become confident, motivated and independent learners, equipped with the skills and dispositions required for lifelong learning.

- Play-based learning (Foundation Stage)
- Active learning particularly in Key Stage 1
- Cross-Curricular / Thematic Approach
- Direct Instruction (Explicit Teaching)
- Inclusive and differentiated strategies
- Child-Centred and Skills-Based Learning
- Outdoor Learning
- Digital and ICT-Supported Learning
- Inclusive and SEN-Focused Approaches
- Differentiated Teaching
- Assessment for Learning (AFL)
- 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
- Educational visits
- 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.

c. Assessment:

Our strategies for Assessment:

- Observation – watching the children on task.
- Questioning/discussion with children.
- Videoing/photographing work in progress.
- Marking children's work according to policy.

Teacher devised tests.

- Statutory formal assessments; CCEA Adaptive Tests in Literacy and Numeracy
- Standardised attainment tests – NGRT, MALT, SWS, MM
- Standardised cognitive tests – BPVS (Yr 1 & Yr 3) CAT 4 (Yr4 & Yr6)
- 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/medium term planning.
- Assessment of outcomes using strategies outlined previously.
- Recording of assessments.
- Using assessments and evaluations to modify original planning where required.

d. Classroom Assistants

Classroom Assistants 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.
- Further differentiating/ modifying tasks to ensure that their pupils enjoy a sense of achievement.
- Undertaking administrative/practical tasks.
- The class teacher holds responsibility for planning work for Classroom Assistants and for ensuring clarity of purpose and understanding of any specific instructions.

## 5. Strategies for Progress and Continuity

Policies and schemes of work are developed by school staff and approved by the Board of Governors. All staff are expected to adhere to these agreed policies and schemes in all aspects of their professional practice.

### a. Role of Subject Coordinators

Subject Coordinators are responsible for:

- Leading the development, review and implementation of curriculum policies and schemes of work to ensure clear progression and continuity within their Area of Learning across the school.
- Supporting colleagues in the planning of work programmes and in the consistent implementation of school policies, including assessment, recording and reporting procedures.
- Monitoring standards of teaching and learning within their Area of Learning and reporting to the Key Stage Leaders and Principal where action or further support is required.

### b. Role of Key Stage Coordinators

Key Stage Coordinators are responsible for:

- Supporting teachers within their Key Stage in the planning and delivery of effective work programmes and in the consistent implementation of school policies, including assessment and recording procedures.
- Monitoring teaching and learning within their Key Stage and advising the Principal of any actions required to support improvement.

### c. Role of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The Senior Leadership Team will monitor and evaluate teaching and learning through:

- Oversight of the roles and responsibilities outlined above.
- Monitoring children's learning and progress at Key Stage and whole-school level to ensure consistency, quality and continuous improvement.

## 6. Strategies for the Use of Resources

To support the development of independent learners, the school will continue to use and, where appropriate, expand the wide range of resources available to enhance teaching and learning. A variety of investigative, problem-solving and research-based activities will be planned to use the following resources:

- Books and printed materials
- Practical and manipulative equipment
- Digital devices, including iPads and laptops
- Interactive technology, including Interactive Touch Panels
- Audio-visual resources, including digital media
- Scientific equipment, including microscopes
- Educational computer software and applications
- Internet-based resources and online learning platforms
- The school grounds and outdoor learning environments
- Visitors and educational visits
- Peer collaboration and cooperative learning opportunities

All resources used will be carefully selected to ensure they are appropriate to the age, ability and individual learning needs of pupils and support inclusive, high-quality learning experiences.

## 6. **Monitoring and Evaluating Teaching and Learning**

The school recognises the importance of regularly monitoring and evaluating learning, teaching and associated processes to ensure continuous improvement and to support pupils in achieving across a broad range of outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation will focus on the quality and impact of provision and practice.

As part of this process, consideration may be given to:

- The quality of pupils' engagement and participation in classroom learning.
- The expectations held by teachers, pupils and parents and the extent to which these expectations influence the quality of teaching and learning.
- The effectiveness of the school in promoting pupils' self-esteem, confidence and positive attitudes to learning.
- The extent to which teaching strategies meet the needs of all pupils, including higher-attaining pupils and those requiring additional support.
- The quality, consistency and effectiveness of marking and feedback practices.
- The use of homework to consolidate learning, reinforce key concepts and support assessment of pupil progress.
- The effectiveness of literacy and numeracy teaching across all areas of the curriculum.
- The use of ICT and digital technologies to enhance teaching and learning across the curriculum.

Areas identified for monitoring and evaluation will reflect the priorities outlined in the School Development Plan and will inform future planning, professional development and school improvement.