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**Learning & Teaching Policy**

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| **Date the policy came into effect** | **January 2020** |
| **Reviewed** | **COVID-19 reviewed August 2020, December 2021** |
| **Name of person responsible for this policy** | **Principal/SLT/BOG** |
| **Other related policies** | **Curricular Policies, Positive Behaviour and Citizenship, SEN, Pastoral Care** |
| **Issued to** | **Staff, governors, parents** |

**Euston Street Primary School & Nursery Unit**

**Learning & Teaching Policy**

**Mission**

*‘Achieving Excellence Together’*

 *‘To work together for excellence in: our learning; our school; our community; and our future’.*

Our purpose therefore is to be an excellent school. We continually strive for excellence in every area of school life. To achieve this aim we must always have the right school **vision and values** and these must be at the heart of all that we do, including our School Development Plan.

**Vision**

In order to achieve excellence in each aspect of school life, our vision is:

 *'To create a safe, happy learning community. A community where together, we inspire and equip our pupils so that they fulfil their potential, use their talents and follow their dreams now and always.’*

**Values**

We believe that our school is a place where the child is at the centre.

*‘We value kindness, integrity, hard work and mutual respect.'*

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil’s education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life.

**Introduction**

The purpose of this policy, as with all of our policies, is to support us as we strive for excellence in every area of school life. To achieve this, we must always have the right school **vision and values** and these must be at the heart of all that we do, including our engagement with parents and guardians.

This policy outlines the procedures that are followed to help ensure that highly effective teaching & learning has the opportunity to impact on standards and attainment as well as pupil wellbeing. This policy complements the Positive Behavior and Citizenship Policy, Pastoral Care Policy and Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy.

The Board of Governors, Senior Leadership Team and staff of Euston Street Primary School recognise that improving the quality of learning and teaching is a central aim of education. The relationship between learning and teaching is complex but the quality of teaching bears directly on the effectiveness of learning. All teachers must be concerned with what high quality learning means and the most effective approaches for promoting learning.

Meeting the needs of each ***individual learner*** and helping each learner to realise their potential is central to highly effective learning and teaching. Learning and teaching is at the heart of the educational process and the quality of the interaction is of fundamental importance in raising standards and attainment.

One of our prime objectives in Euston Street Primary School is to develop autonomous learners and critical thinkers. We wish to develop confidence in children to learn because it is our belief that there is a strong link between a child’s interest and confidence in learning and their academic success; children who feel good about themselves learn more effectively.

Another important aim is for leadership to foster and embed a culture of high quality teaching. The school leadership will construct a School Development Plan for: leading staff training to develop high quality teaching; sharing and observing quality teaching practice; and supporting quality practice. By strengthening the teaching competence and confidence of staff it is believed that it will directly support the raising of pupil standards and attainment.

This policy has been developed following training by the Education Authority and in consultation with pupils, staff, parents and Governors.

**Please see the ESPS Blended Learning Policy for school procedures of Teaching and Learning during school closure for pandemics.**

**Aims**

**This policy aims to:**

* Identify elements of high quality learning;
* Identify elements of high quality teaching;
* Identify the school procedures to share, support and strengthen learning and teaching;
* Identify school procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching;
* Define support for SEN and Newcomer pupils;
* Define the use of Assistant support.

**Board of Governors Duty:**

The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003 (A17) requires the Board of Governors to, ‘safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils’. The Board of Governors will ensure that the school:

* Consult with pupils and parents about teaching and learning as and when required;
* Regularly review and update the Learning & Teaching Policy and other related policies;
* Ensure that policies are easily accessible and communicated to parents;
* Incidents of poor quality learning and teaching addressed and resolved;
* Support staff through evaluation, development, resourcing and wellbeing.



**UNCRC and Euston Street PS & NU**

Euston Street PS is a Rights Respecting School and promotes the rights of children as defined in the articles of the convention.

Article 3 – My best interests must be a top priority in all things that affect me

Article 6 – I have the right to life and to succeed to the best of my ability

Article 12 – I have the right to voice my opinion and be listened to

Article 28 – I have the right to learn and go to school

Article 29 – Education must develop me as a person

**Overall aims of the school**

* Value every child in our school family;
* To strive for excellence in learning for every pupil;
* To strive for excellence in teaching;
* Make our learning environment as safe and as stimulating as possible;
* Ensure we have a clear vision;
* Promote and celebrate excellence in learning at every opportunity;
* Develop and celebrate excellence in teaching at every opportunity;
* Ensure there is strong strategic leadership throughout the school;
* Equip our pupils with the skills, knowledge and character to enjoy a successful, peaceful and content life;
* Promote a sense of stewardship in pupils for the community and environment in which they live;
* Continually consult, inform and partner with all of our school community partners;
* Monitor and evaluate information to identify and address the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and pupil learning;
* Strategically plan to meet the needs of all our pupils using all re-sources available;
* Manage a strategic and rigorous self-evaluation process;
* Lead the school with a strong and dynamic vision for improvement.

**Pastoral Care and Safeguarding**

At the heart of the school Mission, Vision and Values is the pupil and to them best, the school adopt a very nurturing approach to care first and foremost. The preventative curriculum and procedures in school help ensure that pupils feel that their school is a safe place where they feel equipped for learning and challenge. They also feel valued, supported and inspired to achieve.

**Highly Effective Learning**

Improvement in pupil standards and attainment is a main underlying aim of all school development planning. In order to reach a potential in learning, Euston Street recognises that everyone learns best in different ways at different times. Pupils can often have preferred learning styles.

There are three main different types of learning:

The **v*isual 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, audio tapes, discussion and sound effects.

The ***kinesthetic 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.

In order to facilitate each learner and encourage learning potential to be reached, teaching in Euston Street will encompass strategies that will encourage, communicate and challenge pupils with different preferred styles of learning.

To facilitate excellence in learning, standards and attainment, Euston Street undertake a number of strategies and activities including:

* Pupil termly target setting in literacy and numeracy;
* Use of self and peer assessment;
* Baseline feedback in September, January and April;
* Multiple Choice weekly testing;
* Assessment for Learning;
* Access to observing and discussing the qualities of highly effective teaching;
* Excellent Safeguarding and Pastoral Care;
* Parental engagement in school and home learning;
* Strategic home learning tasks;
* Bug Club interactive reading;
* Maths Passport;
* Play Based Learning opportunities;
* Multiple learning areas awards including pupil of the week, maths badges, writing badges, attendance certificates and homework passes, praise notes home, class charts etc.;
* Attendance awards;
* Whole school awards;
* Differentiated work and challenge/thinking activities;
* Number Talk, comprehensions skills, Metacognition (pending 2022) and thinking hat strategies;
* Pupil Voice;
* Healthy Lifestyle project to include PE, Daily Mile, After School Clubs;
* Barnardos Counselling and workshops;
* Nurturing welcome and weekly wellbeing activities;
* Leadership opportunities including Buddies, School Council, Pupil Voice, Eco Committee, Digital Leaders, House Captains (Vice-Captains), RRS working group, language champions;

These strategies and activities are all embedded to foster great behaviour, attitudes and attainment.

The success of highly effective learning will manifest itself in the following ways but not only;

* Raised attainment;
* Improved attendance;
* Participation in wider school life;
* Pupil Voice comments;
* Quality of learning in books;
* Quality of learning recorded on Seesaw;
* Quality of learning as observed through play;
* Wellbeing feedback.

**Curriculum and Planning**

Euston Street Primary School has taken its curricular planning documents directly from the Northern Ireland Curriculum. The curriculum coordinators have developed long term and medium term planning documents that ensure the curriculum is followed coherently and progressively in each Year Group from Nursery to Year 7. Each Year Group and teacher constructs weekly short term planners from their medium term planning. These short term planners include SEN, differentiation, learning intentions, TSPC, groups and individual learning activities, assessment opportunities and evaluations. These plans are evaluated each month by the Principal/SLT.

**General teaching strategies**

**There will be a set of general teaching strategies employed in each classroom. These will generally include but not only;**

* Engaging and stimulating the learner – Active Learning/motivating lesson starters/ movement breaks;
* Having a Big Picture Daily timetable;
* Having short, active introductions to lessons and or new topics;
* Keeping learning moving at an appropriate pace;
* Ensuring pupils have opportunity to help set their own learning targets;
* Having clear learning intentions displayed;
* Having open ended challenges;
* Making thinking important in the classroom;
* Reviewing progress throughout the lesson (AfL);
* Engaging pupils in self and peer assessment;
* Having a stimulating, ordered learning environment;
* Having stimulating and relevant resources to support learning;
* Using highly effective questioning;
* Matching learning needs and preferred learning styles;
* Maximising opportunities to work directly with learners in whole class, group and individual situations;
* Using ICT in the learning process;
* Marking for Improvement is consistent;
* Assessment of learning;
* Promoting positive social interaction in learning.

**Highly Effective Teaching**

Highly Effective Teaching will necessarily take cognisance of all of the above strategies as well as individual pupil learning styles, personal characteristics, baseline positions and other life pressures and demands including social and emotional wellbeing. It will also incorporate important elements to each and every lesson as required to maximise the learning potential, have high expectations of outcome of standards and attainment.

**Highly Effective Questioning**

Questions and questioning techniques influence pupils’ achievement, attitudes and thinking skills. The level of the question tends to result in a similar level of answer. Achievement can improve if high level questions are accompanied by wait-time, redirection, and probing techniques. Effective questioning is a key tool in Assessment for Learning strategies and should be planned such that a range of responses are anticipated. Mistakes should be experienced genuinely as

learning opportunities.

Asking well-structured/thought-out questions has a number of positive benefits

within the classroom including:

* Directing students’ thinking in a particular way
* Encouraging learners to think and actively construct their own schemas
* Structuring or guiding the learning of a task
* Allowing teachers to assess the learning of their students both in terms of
* what they bring to the lesson and what they are taking from the lesson
* Identifying gaps and/or misconceptions in students’ learning
* Providing immediate insight into where the learning of pupils has
* developed to
* Helps students clarify their understanding of a topic
* Motivating students’ interest and engagement in a topic
* Providing opportunities for student learning through discussion
* do not fear failure;
* become increasingly aware of how they learn;
* take responsibility for and are active in managing their own learning and often set their own targets;
* adopt a collaborative approach;
* are confident about expressing their own thinking and listen to and respect others’ ideas;
* review their own and their peers’ progress and have an understanding of how to improve;
* exploit skilfully the opportunities afforded by ICT to extend their knowledge and skills.

**How we share, support and strengthen learning and teaching in Euston Street**

**The Self Evaluation model**

ESPS maintain a regular and rigorous self-evaluation process that is on-going from August to June each year.

The School Development Plan and Action Planning documents identify the annual training and development programme for staff.

Teachers in Euston Street participate in their observed Professional Development each year. The strengths of teaching and learning identified are shared with the whole staff.

The teachers also participate in HUB discussions about high quality learning and teaching.

All members of the school leadership participate in East Belfast school cluster groups that aim to share good practice. Any developments form the cluster groups are disseminated back to staff in Euston Street to further support improvements in high quality learning and teaching.

Progress in learning standards and attainment are shared with staff by way of training and information presentations in assessment and feedback from Monitoring and Evaluation are shared.

Each month teachers participate in Internal Standardisation with colleagues to ensure that there is continuity, progress and consistent learning experiences in each Year Group.

Twice yearly, the whole staff participate in Book Discussions when they have opportunity to look at attainment and standards across the whole school.

Monitoring and Evaluation of pupil learning and teacher planning takes place each term again to ensure consistency in learning and planning and to sustain high expectations of pupil learning.

**Active Learning**

Teachers will engage pupils in Active Learning to include elements of Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities, when and where appropriate. This will help secure maximum engagement and motivation for learning as well has further developing pupil skills.

**Assessment for Learning (AfL)**

When we hear the term ‘assessment’, we tend to think of exams, tests, marks, corrections, stress and pass or fail! We often tend to see assessment as an end product that is separated from the teaching and learning process. Assessment for Learning, however, is part and parcel of the learning process. It allows teachers to work with the learner to determine what is being learned and identify what the ‘next steps’ should be. It provides both teachers and pupils with feedback to help improve the learning.

The proposed assessment arrangements for the Northern Ireland Curriculum place AfL at the heart of the learning and teaching cycle - emphasising progress, raising pupils’ achievement in learning and celebrating success.

Assessment for Learning provides pupils and teachers with a framework to meet these learning needs. The learning intentions and success criteria are set out for pupils. Feedback is given to pupils about their work, what they have done to meet the shared success criteria so far, and what else they need to do. Participation in this process results in pupils becoming increasingly effective, independent learners.

**Assessment for Learning and teachers**

Assessment for Learning provides teachers with a powerful tool. It enables them to identify where pupils are in their learning and to tailor their teaching to meet pupils’ needs. This requires a shift in focus, with some ownership of responsibility for learning shared by the pupils. This encourages a more positive classroom environment and improved teacher/pupil relationship. An ethos of ‘you can do’ is promoted and where pupils recognise that getting into difficulties and making mistakes is all part of effective learning.

In Euston Street Primary we believe the effective use of AfL involves the following key actions:

* setting learning targets;
* sharing learning intentions and success criteria;
* giving effective feedback to pupils;
* effective questioning; and
* encouraging pupils to assess and evaluate their own and others’ work.

**Self & Peer assessment for pupils**

Teachers and assistants will engage the pupils in completing self and peer assessment each month. This ability to critique and evaluate will support highly effective learning. Dylan Wiliam’s 5 areas of Assessment for Learning underpin the purpose of peer and self-assessment in Euston Street; designed

1. **Clarifying, sharing, and understanding learning intentions and criteria for success**– getting the students to really understand what their classroom experience will be and how their success will be measured.
2. **Engineering effective classroom discussions, activities, and learning tasks that elicit evidence of learning**– developing effective classroom instructional strategies that allow for the measurement of success.
3. **Providing feedback that moves learning forward**– working with students to provide them the information they need to better understand problems and solutions.
4. **Activating learners as instructional resources for one another**– getting students involved with each other in discussions and working groups can help improve student learning.
5. **Activating learners as owners of their learning**– self-regulation of learning leads to student performance improvement.

Other Assessment of Learning in Euston Street is also designed to support feedback and give a summative evaluation of the progress in learning. These include:

* Feed Up and Feed Forward written comments;
* Engaging pupils in their verbal feedback each week;
* Peer and self evaluation;
* Marking learning in class;
* Friday Multiple Choice testing;
* Baseline tests in September and January;
* Standardised testing in May;

All assessment and feedback is designed to:

* match identified purposes and encourage learners;
* emphasises the formative, celebrating what has been achieved and identifying what still has to be achieved to progress;
* be an appropriate blend of self, peer and teacher review;
* provide useful information which is regularly shared with learners and where appropriate with parents/carers and partner professionals;
* be formal and informal;
* be summative and formative.

**Monitoring and Evaluating**

Each term school leaders monitor and evaluate the pupil learning and teacher planning in school. This is to ensure that high expectations of learning and consistency of teaching are being adhered to and if necessary, to identify areas for development. Monitoring and Evaluating takes place in line with curricular areas identified for school development.

**Board Partnerships**

Each school leaders have at least 1 Board member who evaluates the ongoing progress of their Action Planning. These evaluations take place each term.

**Voice Sessions**

In Euston Street each staff member, each pupil and each parent have the opportunity to be heard in relation to learning and teaching.

The Pupil Voice takes place twice a year. Staff and parent voices take place each cycle of the school development plan or as required.

**Pupil Wellbeing**

All pupils have the opportunity to take part in Pupil Voice each year. The pupils in Years 4 – 7 will also form a School Council. Pupils can express their voice through Chatter Boxes in each classroom. Pupils can also see a school counsellor each week. Parents, staff and pupils monitor their wellbeing each term. Pupils with SEN or who are Newcomer pupils receive support as required in school. Every child is welcomed each day as part of the Nurturing school.

Pupil wellbeing is supported in school in a variety of ways including but not only:

* An active, zoned playground;
* Whole School Daily Mile 3 times weekly;
* PE lessons;
* Preventative curriculum including PDMU and E:Safety;
* After school activities;
* Rewards including certificates, Houses, dojos, attendance awards, literacy/numeracy/star pupil awards;
* Leadership opportunities including Digital Leaders, ECO Committee, House Captains, Playground Buddies, Reading Buddies, School Council, RRS Ambassadors, Language Champions;
* School Counselling each week;
* Barnardos BOUNCE programme for Years 5 – 7;
* School shows and concerts;
* School trips.

**Pupil Awards**

In ESPS we implement a range of awards to help with the preventative curriculum, support attendance, develop pupil wellbeing and encourage and engage pupils in their learning, including but not only:

* RRS class Awards
* Attendance awards
* Classroom reward charts
* TESCO pupil Awards
* Multiple learning area Awards
* Leadership badges

**Meetings**

Staff attend meetings each week and school curricular development is a standing item at these meetings. The school senior leadership and management teams have meetings each month and school curricular development is a standing item at these meetings. There are Key Stage meetings each month

**SEN**

It is sufficient to mention here general guidelines. The teacher will work with the classroom assistant, Learning Support Co-ordinator, parents/carers, and medical, psychological and social services where appropriate, in collecting and recording information which may lead to preventative action in the early years. Pupils with a special educational need are supported by the class teacher and learning support if required. Each pupil on the Code of Practice has an Individual Education Plan. The teachers, pupils and parents contribute to these plans and they are discussed twice a year at parent teacher meetings in October and February. The SEN Coordinator evaluates these plans twice each year.

Pupils who are statemented are also supported by the one to one assistant.

Each classroom is an ASD friendly classroom in terms of expectations, resourcing, language and visuals. The school has a sensory area and sensory trails around the school.

**Newcomer**

Newcomer pupils are supported by the class teacher and by the Newcomer Support teacher. Each classroom is supported with Newcomer resources. The school has labels in Polish and Romanian throughout. Parents receive interpreters at each parent teacher meeting and as required. Newsletters, letters and information booklets are translated into Romanian and Polish and other languages as required.

**Underachievement**

Pupils who are deemed to be underachieving in literacy and numeracy are supported by the class teacher and they have a Pupil Improvement Plan that is evaluated twice a year. Pupils contribute to these plans by setting targets for themselves.

**Above average ability pupils (from CEA NI)**

There is no universally agreed definition of students who would be assessed as Gifted and Talented. Some accepted terms are *genius, more able, exceptionally able, very able, gifted and talented, bright, virtuoso* and *high flyer*. For the purpose of this document, CCEA has used the term Gifted and Talented to describe those students who are achieving or who have the potential to achieve a level substantially beyond the rest of their peer group inside their **particular school,** be that school a nursery, primary, selective and non-selective post- We will ensure that the process of identification of such pupils is continuous and that it draws on both quantitative and qualitative information.

Consequently, there needs to be a variety of strategies to identify gifted and talented children. They have an equal right to the same level of challenge and support as other pupils, if they are to fulfil their potential, therefore the curriculum overall must provide adequate stimulus and enrichment and extension work needs to be linked carefully with the curriculum.

Problem-solving and opportunities to investigate and research will feature frequently in their programme of work and records will indicate all-round strengths and needs – not only those relating to academic progress.

Pupils who display particular academic abilities are supported in a variety of ways. The class teacher will provide them with specific differentiated work and daily challenges in numeracy and literacy. The more able pupils including those who are well above the average will also be offered opportunity to participate in Horizon Group (see Horizon Group policy).

**Classroom Assistants**

General Classroom Assistants are deployed to Nursery, Year1, Year 2 and as required in the school. SEN Assistants support their individual children throughout the school. All classroom assistants are expected to be familiar with short term weekly planning and assist the pupil as needed and as directed by the teacher, in order to help the pupils, reach their learning potential.

**Community Relations, Equality and Diversity**

It is our belief that the whole community has a part to play in the all-round development of our children in Euston Street Primary School. We therefore will continue to make and maintain links with individuals and groups in the community for the mutual benefit of all. These will include links with:

* parents/carers (volunteer helpers, use of parents’/carers’ skills and talents, PSA);
* Board of Governor members;
* other primary schools (sporting activities, visits etc);
* local post primary schools, colleges and universities;
* local churches (Assemblies, participation in Church services and events);
* Woodstock Public Library;
* local places of interest (E.g. Stormont, Sentry Hill etc.);
* local services (E.g. PSNI, Fire and Rescue Service, Ambulance Service etc.);
* Education Authority and associated services;
* links with sporting clubs e.g. Ulster Rugby.

**Home Learning and Parent Voice**

We actively seek parental views (Parent Focus Group, PSA, Parent Group, Parent Voice, parent Training & Information sessions) and their support on a wide range of school life including Policy development and Development Planning. We also request that parents support all Home Learning activities set by the teachers. This will include written homework, mental maths, spellings and reading. Support at home can facilitate improvements in learning in the classroom. Parents are provided with regular updates on their child’s progress including but not only term 1 and Term 3 reports, parent meetings, MCT, baseline and GL tests results in Literacy and Numeracy, informal contact, attendance letters, home-school books etc.

We also encourage parents to ensure that their child has good attendance levels (95%+).

**Conclusion**

The content of this policy is reviewed every three years or amended as appropriate to reflect new guidance/recommendations. Therefore, the implementation of this policy will ensure that the learning and teaching taking place in Euston Street Primary School is highly effective and meet the needs of all the pupils.