



TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

YSGOL Y CREUDDYN

This policy has been approved by the School Council
and Governing Body.

School Council:

Signed: _____
(Head Pupil)

Date: _____

Governing Body:

Signed: _____
(Chair of Governors)

Date: _____

Review date: _____



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INTRODUCTION

This polisi aims to describe how the school can fulfil its vision of becoming a progressive and innovative teaching and learning environment that meets the needs of all our learners and the community. It reflects the schools aim to provide education that offers every pupil an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential and to ensure that individuals develop the necessary skills, information and understanding to be independent, lifelong learners who will make a constructive contribution to society and be valuable members of the workforce.

Learning is the most important activity that takes place in Ysgol y Creuddyn.

We acknowledge that every learner has unique skills, abilities and aptitudes, and the right to access a broad, challenging and appropriate curriculum. Every learner also has the right to experience a range of teaching and learning styles that allow them to fulfil their potential.

To achieve this, teaching practitioners are expected to convey a range of information, skills and aspects in every lesson or series of lessons. This must be reflected in the planning, which should derive from the following:

- National Curriculum;
- Literacy and Numeracy Framework;
- Examination board specifications;
- Personal and Social Education Frameworks;
- Workplace Education and Skills;
- Welsh Curriculum.

All learners have their own ways of learning. This policy offers strategies that increase the likelihood that learners will learn effectively.

This Teaching and Learning Policy should be considered alongside the school's other policies, including:

- Homework Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Additional Learning Needs Policy
- More Able and Talented Policy
- Differentiation Policy
- Behaviour and Equal Opportunities Policy



PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- To provide a safe and stimulating environment for learners. Given the right circumstances, every learner can achieve amazing things.
- To provide a safe and stimulating environment for educators, try out different ideas and take risks when planning and providing lessons.
- To allow learners to achieve their full potential by using different learning styles and through challenging learning experiences.
- To provide an appropriate Curriculum in line with the requirements of the Revised National Curriculum 2008 and examination board specifications that will motivate, commit and challenge learners while at the same time equipping them with the necessary skills to deal with the requirements of society and the workplace in the 21st century.
- To set high expectations for every learner in order to raise aspirations, and the standards of learning and teaching – there is strong evidence to show that it is this aspect that has the greatest effect on learner achievement.
- To offer general guidance to the teaching staff in order to ensure consistency and high standards across all the learning experiences.



EFFECTIVE LEARNING

As educators, our role is to create the right conditions for effective learning by:

- motivating learners to enjoy learning;
- creating an environment that promotes learning;
- developing confident, flexible, creative learners who can collaborate effectively with others;
- developing metaconsciousness;
- responding to and providing a variety of learning methods;
- ensuring that every learner is competent in basic skills;
- developing effective communication;
- enriching learning through ICT;

- enabling and encouraging learners to be confident, flexible and conscientious learners;
- promoting independent learning, where learners take responsibility for their own learning;
- increasing the learners' ability to think, question, analyse and solve problems;
- challenging learners to extend their learning opportunities;
- monitoring and assessing the learning process;
- fostering mature and responsible attitudes; self-respect and respect for others;
- establishing awareness of social, political, economic and environmental issues;
- nurturing learners to have confidence in their bilingualism, culture and heritage and respect for other cultures;
- cultivating entrepreneurial attitudes towards the workplace;
- developing responsible citizens who contribute to health and welfare;

EFFECTIVE TEACHING

for effective learning, the educator must:

- ensure that lessons begin promptly;
- show enthusiasm for their subject;
- relate the work to the learner, always remaining aware of individual learning needs;
- maintain a good pace and challenge learners to complete tasks within time constraints;
- have high expectations, linked to suitable and challenging targets for every pupil;
- provide encouragement and specific praise for achievements;
- create a variety of interesting learning activities that learners can enjoy;
- value the contributions of every pupil;
- challenge incorrect answers in a positive manner;
- build on prior learning and ensure continuity and development;
- ensure that lessons are pupil-based, avoiding too many teacher-based activities;

To create an atmosphere that supports learning the educator must:

- use displays that are regularly changed;
- use information posters and 3D models where possible/appropriate;
- display lists of subject vocabulary and definitions;
- display the work of learners;
- create attractive learning environments in classrooms;
- use a variety of resources that promote active learning;
- create seating plans that promote learning;

To manage the learning environment effectively, the educator must:

- meet learners at the door;
- make good use of space when organising the class, ensuring that there are plenty of resources in organised and tidy classrooms;
- establish rules for work that involves discussion and listening;
- vary groupings to facilitate pair and group work and regular change of learning partner;
- develop a range of group work; from pair work to problem-solving activities for large groups;
- ensure consistency when using AfL (Assessment for Learning);
- encourage self-discipline;
- consider suitable differentiation of work;
- establish a positive relationship between teacher and pupil;
- maintain high standards of discipline and ensure that every learner understands the consequences of unacceptable behaviour;
- adapt lessons according to the response of learners to learning and teaching and to unexpected developments in class;

To ensure that learners develop their skills, the educator must:

- create opportunities to develop numeracy skills;
- create opportunities to develop literacy skills;
- allow sufficient time to think when asking a question;
- plan and structure opportunities for individual, pair and group work;
- use ICT effectively, ensuring that ICT is appropriate for the task;

To ensure that the learner understands the learning process, the educator must:

- learn active listening skills;
- share ideas and resources and consider the contributions of others;
- create tasks that develop the skills of individual learners;
- teach and practise 'how to learn' techniques;
- teach and practise revision techniques;
- offer opportunities for practising teamworking and problem-solving;
- create opportunities for learners to set learning objectives and select resources that are suitable for their own personal learning methods;
- plan purposeful homework as an intrinsic part of the work;

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNERS

Teaching and Learning is a partnership between learners and teachers, and so learners must take responsibility for their learning. Learners should:

- Respond with enthusiasm and demonstrate enjoyment of the work.
- Be responsible, reflective and be able to reason.
- Work effectively and purposefully within a range of contexts.

- Arrive at lessons prepared to learn and ready to make the most of the opportunity to do so.
- Ask questions where appropriate – to each other and the teacher.
- Support each other and collaborate, acknowledging the validity of all contributions.
- Conduct a self-assessment or peer assessment with confidence, be able to apply the success criteria and set appropriate targets for improvement.
- Know where to go for help and acknowledge that further progress is possible.
- Be able to select appropriate learning resources to help develop their own learning.
- Work with increasing independence, developing the skills that will enable them to be lifelong learners.
- Use ITC to develop their learning and access a variety of sources, as well as use appropriate methods of presenting their work.
- Develop an understanding of their favourite method of learning.



THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The learning environment is characterized by a welcoming atmosphere and positive relationships between educators and learners in stimulating and inspiring environments. Educators should encourage learners to:

- behave appropriately in lessons.
- demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning.
- show respect, care and concern for others.
- take responsibility for their actions and work.
- develop their emotional capabilities, including their self-confidence and self-esteem.
- develop the capabilities needed to improve their own learning, work with others, solve problems and develop their ideas in order to move on to the next phase of learning.

SCHEME OF WORK (long term)

Staff are required to demonstrate good subject knowledge and to be aware of developments within their subject. They must have up-to-date knowledge of specifications and subject requirements and Heads of Departments must ensure this as part of their Performance Management. It is the responsibility of the Heads of Department to ensure that the teaching staff are given a suitable range of learning groups with regard to age, ability and medium, so that staff receive continuing professional development, and equal opportunities and respect.

Schemes of Work must be prepared in every subject for every class. These are working documents that will be reviewed regularly and include all the information necessary for teaching lessons in the subject. These are usually divided into the following subjects or modules:

- time needed/number of lessons in a module;
- objectives of the lesson or group of lessons;
- strategies for differentiation; (see Differentiation Policy);
- range of learning activities which will gradually develop a variety of learning methods;
- opportunities to develop independent and co-operative study and learning skills;
- development of the Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks;
- assessment for Learning opportunities;
- creation of homework tasks that relate to the learning objectives;
- necessary resources;
- cross-curricular learning e.g. ESDGC, Cwricwlwm Cymreig, is identified where appropriate.



PLANNING AND PREPARING LESSONS

1. Lesson planning should focus on the **progress of learners** and show that learning in lessons is a key indicator.
 2. Lessons should be planned in such a way that they build on **prior learning**, ensuring progression and continuity.
 3. Educators should make use of all the information available (statistically and personally) in order to set clear, realistic but challenging targets, and to **plan differentiated learning opportunities** (see Differentiation Policy).
- Educators should aim for intellectual quality when planning, using the YYC Lesson Plan Template for observed lessons.
 - Relevant sections of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework, National Curriculum and course syllabus should be referred to when creating a lesson plan.
 - Appropriate resources, including ICT and specialist equipment should be chosen to promote and improve learning.

Literacy and Numeracy skills are essential elements of all learning and should be developed by all educators **whenever possible**.



LESSON STRUCTURE

Ysgol y Creuddyn has adopted the active learning model 'Accelerated learning cycle' – Alistair Smith as a framework for planning lessons in order to ensure consistency across the school. It can, however, be adapted for specific lesson objectives or a series of specific lessons.

Where appropriate, the following six steps must be followed:

1	Linking Learning with the big picture	Review prior learning that relates to the lesson. This could be an introductory activity. / Explain or remind learners how this lesson links with the whole subject / theme.
2	Learning Objectives and Success Criteria	Introduce the learning objectives and agree on the success criteria.
3	Introduction / modelling	Introduce new information by using as many of the senses as possible (VAK) and modelling.
4	Activities	Main part of the lesson, provide a variety of activities based on the learning objectives. Activity – reflection – activity - reflection.
5	Showing understanding	Learners show their learning in some way, perhaps by sharing it with a partner or producing a piece of work in any form.
6	Reviewing and reflection	Refer to the learning outcomes. Reflect on the learning and learning process.

See 'Active learning' Appendix for further details.



ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

The focus is on three main areas for development of assessment for learning strategies in the classroom:

- Questioning technique
- Feedback to learners
- Peer and self-assessment.

Questioning Technique

It's important that we ask questions that are worth asking and answering! We must be clear about the purpose of our question and ensure that learners understand what kind of thinking is being promoted.

See 'Active learning' appendix - section on effective questioning for further details.

Giving feedback to learners

Research has shown that feedback in the form of grades or marks has a negative effect on learning. However, comments are only useful if they are used to guide further work or 'close the learning gap', and if the teacher ensures that previous 'next steps' have been completed. It is the quality rather than the quantity of dialogue that matters when giving feedback on written and oral work. Giving learners written or oral comments also helps them to focus on the learning issues rather than trying to interpret a mark or grade.

It's essential that *Assessment for learning* techniques are used *throughout* the learning. Assessment should be made consistently rather than 'towards the end', and it is more effective when given in 'chunks'. As 'Assessment for learning' helps learners to make improvements, it is pointless to simply give a short summary of these improvements, as the opportunities to progress and make improvements in those particular contexts will be lost. This can be done through feedback, for example by:

- checking against the success criteria;
- comparing own work with model examples provided by the teacher;
- class discussion of a learner's continuing work, displayed on the whiteboard using an imager/web camera/video camera;
- the teacher questioning continuing work;
- the teacher stimulating and offering verbal comments to individuals/small groups;
- the teacher raising a common problem experienced by the whole class;
- peer and self-assessment;

One improvement per lesson for every learner would suggest very slow progress. Instead, we should think in terms of increasing the opportunities to improve *throughout* the lesson, so that the learners realise they are progressing and steadily improving.

Peer and self-assessment

There is a unique value to peer assessment because learners may accept each other's criticisms where they would not taking the criticism of an educator seriously. They communicate in a learner's natural language. If learners do not understand an explanation, they are more likely to interrupt one of their peers in situations where they would never interrupt a teacher. Peer assessment puts learners in control of their work.

Self-assessment can take place only if the educator helps learners to develop this skill, especially learners who have low attainment. As with effective group work, this takes time and practise. Meaningful self-assessment is often a direct by-product of effective peer assessment: learners must be 'trained' to self-evaluate by firstly modelling useful types of questions and thinking. Educators often say that learners must first engage with and understand peer assessment in order to self-assess

effectively. Similarly, in order to ensure successful peer assessment, educators need to have modelled processes and strategies with the learners.

Peer and self-assessment involves a lot more than just correcting mistakes or weaknesses; it requires the learner to actively learn. When a learner is reflecting on their levels of understanding, this can be used to guide teaching in the future. By including learners when writing and marking assessments, learners can see that they are benefitting from tests rather than suffering, because testing can help them to improve their own learning.

ACCOUNTABILITY, MONITORING AND APPRAISAL OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

- A calendar for quality assurance, departmental appraisal and meetings on Tuesday evenings has been organized for departmental appraisal work.
- **Educators** are responsible for the progress of learners in their classes and reporting back to the head of department.
- **Educators** are responsible for appraising their own lessons and professional development, sharing experiences and good practice across the department
- **Heads of Department** are responsible for appraising the quality of teaching and learner standards of attainment by setting targets for improvement – teaching and learning should be regularly discussed within departmental meetings.
- **Heads of Department** should use the data available to them, including results, FFT and internal progress tracking system data, to make appraisals and informed decisions
- **Heads of Year** are responsible for tracking progress across all subjects, identifying patterns and inconsistencies
- The **Senior Management Team** works with the heads of department and heads of year to discuss the evidence of monitoring procedures. They track progress against the School Improvement Plan and identify aspects to be targeted and areas for further development.

HOMEWORK

Setting homework gives learners an opportunity to continue learning outside their lessons, providing time for extended research that will develop the independent teaching skills of our learners and reinforce their understanding.

More information can be found in the full school policy.

MARKING AND FEEDBACK

Feedback is a core element of assessment for learning, and assessment for learning is a core element of ensuring personalised learning. We must aim to achieve balance when marking while at the same time providing effective feedback needed to allow learners to make excellent progress. Feedback to learners can be written, on-line or verbal. Whichever method is best suited to a specific subject or field, the feedback and comments must always identify strengths and aspects to be developed, and also identify suitable targets for learners.

More information can be found in the full school policy.

MORE ABLE AND TALENTED

- According to the Assembly, the term 'more able and talented' "encompasses pupils who are more able across the curriculum as well as those who show talent in one or more specific areas and strengths in leadership, teamworking and entrepreneurial skills".
- At Ysgol y Creuddyn we believe that every learner has the right to an education that will allow them to achieve their full potential. We are committed to providing a curriculum that is sufficiently challenging for every learner.
- We acknowledge the need to identify MAT learners in order to create appropriate opportunities and provision. We keep a register of these learners, based on a wide range of assessment strategies, including internal assessments and external data such as the Fischer Family Trust data.
- We aim to use a range of learning styles, teaching methods and organizational strategies to satisfy the needs of MAT learners. These should make use of all the resources in the school, as well as resources in other institutions. MAT learners must be encouraged to take risks and to show their various skills, such as creative or enterprise skills.
- The opinion of MAT learners should be heard and taken into consideration, and they should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. It is good practice to include parents or guardians in this process.
- We recognize the importance of ensuring that effective procedures are in place in order to monitor the progress of the MAT learner and monitor the effectiveness of our strategies. It's important that school staff are trained to understand the needs of MAT learners and how to provide for them in class every day.

- The SMT and **MAT Co-ordinator** will collate the results and reports of the learners and prepare a list for heads of department identifying those learners.
- It is the responsibility of heads of department to use this data in order to identify MAT learners in the subject and pass their names on to the SMT.
- The feedback of heads of department to the SMT will be a base for targetting resources for individuals.
- More information can be found in the school's full policy on MAT learners.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

- According to the **Code of Practice**, children have Additional Learning Needs if they have a learning difficulty that requires that special educational provision be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty:
 - If they have difficulty in learning that is substantially greater than the difficulty that faces most children of the same age; or
 - If they have a disability that prevents or hinders them from using educational facilities of the kind that are generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the local educational authority area.
- At Ysgol y Creuddyn, we consider the individual needs of every ALN learner. ALN learners have needs that vary from moderate to severe and so the provision for such learners will vary as required. A list is kept of ALN learners and an annual review is made of their progress, of which the learners' opinion about their own progress is an important part.
- **Parents** are seen as partners in the academic process in order to ensure effective educational provision. Parents are notified early on about any difficulties that their child is having, and they will have an opportunity to discuss the situation with the ALN co-ordinator before the school arranges additional provision.
- The **ALN Co-ordinator** creates individual education plans for learners on the ALN register. These are distributed annually to all teaching staff. Training on the latest developments is also arranged for staff, according to need.
- More information can be found in the school's full policy on ALN learners.