



St Anthony's Primary School is a place of Learning and Teaching.

We recognise ourselves as learners and teachers.

We teach our children to recognise themselves as learners and teachers also.

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Learning does not end when school is over.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century demands that our children recognise themselves as life-long learners.

It is our responsibility to encourage them to learn **HOW** to learn;

To learn the **SKILLS** to become learners for life;

To develop dispositions to be learners and independent thinkers.

Our curriculum policies, our resources, our teaching approaches and strategies and our relationships within school, are developed and structured to meet this ideal:-

That our children will meet valuable and enjoyable learning experiences and leave us as confident, caring, productive and thinking members of a society.



## Aims

- We aim to provide an environment in which children feel secure and valued as individuals and are encouraged to develop and value positive relationships with others through co-operation and tolerance.
- We aim to provide a stimulating learning environment, which provides children of different abilities with a variety of relevant teaching strategies and resources that will lead them towards becoming enthusiastic and independent learners questioning, speculating and analysing.
- We aim to continually monitor and evaluate the learning environment to ensure total effectiveness of our teaching and of the curriculum to meet the changing needs of our school and our community. We would consequently aim to develop a culture where both teachers and pupils become confident and effective self-evaluators.
- We aim to encourage parents and all members of our community to become involved in school life so as to enhance the children's education, welfare and social awareness.

The following values underpin our philosophies, policies and practice and inform our teaching approaches:

- Mutual Respect (Equality and Inclusivity incorporating the rights of all to learn).
- Perseverance (The ability to keep trying, to accept difficulty as motivation to succeed).
- Promotion of self-esteem and confidence.
- Encouragement and motivation giving positive responses to each individual.
- Development of the whole child, physically, morally, spiritually, emotionally and socially.

In St Anthony's we believe that these values are promoted when children:

- Feel safe, confident and valued.
- Experience success through a wide range of activities, tasks, teaching strategies and resources.
- Are taught to recognise that difficulty/challenge is part of learning and should not be regarded as failure.
- Have ownership and understanding of clear classroom and school rules.
- Have opportunities to contribute to elements of their learning and the development of their own interests.

## **Learning**

Children learn using a variety of diverse learning and thinking styles. In order to meet their needs the teacher will use a variety of different styles and will provide access to different learning materials and activities.

### **Positive Learning Environment**

A positive learning environment is one where staff and pupils share good working relationships and where all members of the school community feel supported and valued.

For our pupils, we believe that the following elements are essential in promoting a positive learning environment:

- Good teacher/pupil relationships
- Positive approach
- Stimulating/attractive classroom environment
- Sound classroom routines
- Management reward system
- Well matched, achievable tasks

The school management recognises that a positive learning environment is also important for the adults in school and includes the following elements in management structures:

- Awareness of staff welfare
- Clear management structure
- Opportunities for staff development
- Promoting staff relationships through out-of-school activities
- Provide a stress-free, relaxing staff room
- Support for new and substitute teachers

## **The Autonomous Learner**

The autonomous learner is a highly motivated and confident learner.

The autonomous learner is:

- Literate and numerate
- Organised
- Analytical
- Reflective
- Confident to work in a variety of situations
- A skilled communicator
- Able to show initiative but is prepared to seek help when necessary

We aim to provide the following to develop in our pupil's attributes and dispositions of autonomous learners:

- Access to a variety of resources including, ICT, reference books, companies and the wider community
- Opportunities to input their own learning
- Challenging Tasks set, requiring them to plan and evaluate
- Research topics and present results to a variety of audiences e.g. PowerPoint
- Reflect, discuss and evaluate their work
- Enter competitions
- Tackle extended tasks
- Recognise the value of spontaneous learning
- Opportunities to contribute to team and group tasks

## **Monitoring and Assessing Learning**

Management facilitates structures, which allow all teachers to participate actively in the development of an affective system for monitoring and assessing learning in our school, through rigorous collection of evidence, critical reflection of our own methods and evaluation of our learning initiatives.

This is achieved by employing the following strategies:

- Examination of exercise books
- Homework
- Standardised and diagnostic testing
- Promoting self-esteem and self confidence
- Pupil tracking
- End of KS Assessment (*Currently suspended due to industrial action*)
- Development and expansion of role of co-ordinator
- High expectations held by teachers
- Good use of questions and answers
- Staff development in teaching and learning strategies
- Provide opportunities for teachers and pupils to become confident self evaluators
- Class Assessment

# Planning

Careful planning is essential to ensure effective teaching and learning.

## **Elements of good planning**

- An agreed whole school planning format
- Co-operative planning is the most effective
- There is a need for short, medium and long term planning
- Planning should include teaching approaches, learning outcomes, learning activities and resources
- Evaluation of plans effectiveness should inform forward planning
- IEPs are used where necessary
- Planning should take account of different learning styles and intelligences
- Teachers have knowledge of, and include in their planning, a broad range of different types of questions to promote optimum thinking and learning opportunities
- Planning should further include differentiation
- Classroom Assistants are involved in planning
- Children are made aware of expected outcomes before each lesson and are provided with feedback

Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences

*Linguistic*

*Logical/Mathematical*

*Spatial*

*Musical*

*Bodily/Kinesthetic*

*Interpersonal*

*Intrapersonal*

*(Natural – ability to recognise and classify plants/animals/cultural artefacts – e.g. Darwin)*

Learning Styles: *Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic*

## **Strategies and Approaches**

In order to provide quality Teaching and Learning we will adopt teaching approaches which are relevant and stimulating and which will encourage the holistic development of each child.

- Individual/Group/Whole Class
- Practical activities
- Discussions
- Flexible grouping arrangements
- Opportunities for independent learning and critical thinking
- Teachers conscientiously use a range of effective questions (*appendix 1*)
- Explanation and Exposition
- Topic based cross curriculum approaches
- Multi Media
- Multi Sensory
- Field trips/Educational visits
- Sharing Teaching expertise where appropriate
- Team Teaching where appropriate

## **The Classroom Environment**

Children learn best in a safe, friendly, supportive and stimulating environment where positive attitudes are fostered through mutual respect.

Elements of good classroom organisation and environment:

- Seating – arranged to enable children to engage fully in class activities, engage fully in the learning process and to encourage social interaction. Seating should be flexible to facilitate **a)** Group work, **b)** Individual, **c)** Whole class, **d)** Mixed ability/same ability.
- Facilities for displaying children's work
- Resources/computers positioned for easy access and to encourage independence
- Child generated class rules displayed on wall
- Well established, appropriate class routines to promote a feeling of security and to encourage independent learning



## **Special Needs – Children with Learning Difficulties**

We are committed to providing all of our pupils with access to rich educational experiences and opportunities for success. Within the context of our whole school environment, encompassing a broad range of needs and abilities, we make special provision for our children with learning difficulties through a systematic approach of identification, gathering evidence, planning and action.

There will be acknowledgement and respect for the uniqueness, individuality and specific needs of each pupil.

### Identification:

- Nursery – Primary 1 Transition Form
- Baseline Assessment
- Early Identification checklist – SEN
- Middle Infant Screening Test – Primary 2
- Class, standardised and end of Key Stage assessment
- Individual Diagnostic Assessment
- Continuous teacher monitoring and observation of pupils' development
- Individual Record Cards
- IT Assessment Strategies
- School related agencies – parents, SENCO, medical, psychological, social services

### Provision:

- I.E.Ps
- Referral to Educational Psychology Service
- Classroom activities to promote self-worth e.g. circle Time; extra curricular activities
- Parental Involvement
- Differentiation
- Setting of short-term achievable targets and differentiated activities to enable children to experience success and thereby raise self-esteem
- IT Accreditation Scheme (*Currently suspended due to industrial action*)
- Communication and liaison between teachers
- Teacher – understanding of the child's interests, strengths and needs
- Effective management of classroom assistants
- Inclusion
- Broad range of resources appropriate to children's needs
- Provision of appropriate intervention programmes e.g. Paired Reading, Reading Partnership, Forward Together (Parent Programme), Thinking Skills

## **Special Needs – Extending High Achievers**

We recognise that some children are high achievers. Any child who shows exceptional talent or achievement requires special provision in class. We will endeavour to enable these children to reach their full potential bearing in mind that their needs in the social and emotional domains are equal to those of all of our pupils.

### Identification:

- Classroom observation involving both written and oral work
- Class Tests
- Standardised Tests
- End of Key Stage Assessment
- Communication with parents and between teachers
- Specific talents
- Information from other sources

### Provision:

- Individual teacher attention
- Individual planning
- Extension activities which challenge
- Extra Curricular Activities
- Use of reward system
- Pupil tracking
- Competitions to motivate
- Personal projects
- ‘Habits of Mind’ approaches
- Development of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills
- Involvement in SELB initiatives e.g. Gifted and Talented Programme

# Community Involvement

We recognise that St Anthony's does not exist in isolation and are committed to encouraging our children to become active and responsible members of their community. We therefore strive to establish links with our parish and the wider community and through these links, enhance the teaching and learning opportunities for our children:

## Community Involvement:

- Parents – meetings, assembly, newsletter, reports, website, paired reading
- Other Primary Schools – sports, EMU, music, religious ceremonies
- Post Primary Schools – induction, work experience
- Church – school chaplain, sacraments, altar services, class mass, E.I., Family Ministry
- Local organisations – Gaelic clubs, SVDP, Moyraverty dancing, St Anthony's drama club
- Department of Education/SELB
- CCMS
- Choir – carol services, concerts, enhancing local events and services
- Competitions
- Fire & Ambulance services
- PSNI
- Dental Health Team – Crest Challenge
- Nurses
- Educational Psychology Service
- Behaviour Management Team
- ASD Intervention Support Team
- EWO
- Speech Therapist
- Cass Advisors
- Teacher Training Colleges – Teaching practice
- Industry
- Charitable Organisations – Goal, Trocaire. SVDP, Christian Aid, NSPCC
- European links with schools abroad
- Other religions
- General community – talks etc
- Travelling community – support groups
- Craigavon Youth Sports – Fundamentals; Coaching
- Social Services
- Child and Parent Services (Health Trust)
- Pupil Personal Development Services (SELB)
- School Website

# SELF EVALUATION

Self evaluation is important as a means of identifying and addressing strengths and weaknesses to facilitate development. The pupils, teaching staff and non teaching staff are all involved in self evaluation. This collective involvement and responsibility will establish autonomy and ownership of the school's improvement. Our teachers are reflective teachers and learners and as such are models for our pupils to follow, to become reflective learners and thinkers.

## Strategies/Methods used:

- Evaluation of relationships with pupils/staff/parents
- Review personal teaching styles in light of learning achieved
- Evaluation of learning at year group, KS and whole staff level
- Review and adapt resources
- Take on board and share good practice – acknowledge achievements
- Addressing areas for development through attendance at courses
- Staff Task Teams work on the School Development Plan, involving self-evaluation and identification
- Involvement in 'Together Towards Improvement Initiative'
- Whole staff development to promote awareness of quality indicators of effective practice
- Staff audit on Curriculum Development
- Communication and liaising throughout whole school
- Teacher monitoring
- Training of non teaching staff
- Pupil self assessment
- Explicit learning outcomes expected – each lesson
- Assessment of pupils, work
- Performance Review and Staff Development Process

## LEARNING INTENTIONS

- Be explicit about the kind/s of thinking children will be doing (WALT)
- Share these with the children
- Plan for and share success criteria  
(Outcome and Process)  
(O) By the end of the lesson we will know we've been successful because...  
(P) What you need to focus on while working to achieve success is ...
- Think about the way you use questions  
Learning Intentions can be written as questions (helps children make connections)  
How long do you give children to respond? Children need time to process and formulate an answer. At least 5 seconds is needed for this: research shows that average wait time is .09 second!  
Do they have opportunities to articulate their responses to peers before responding?
- If Learning Intention is clear, feedback will be very focussed – in terms of the outcome and the process – children will know what to do to improve
- The clearer the learning intention, the easier it is to use peer and self-assessment. Traffic Lights can be used: RED – Don't really understand; AMBER – Not too sure about ...; GREEN – I've got it! Amber and green could work together to sort it out; Reds could have your attention.  
(A self evaluation poster can help – children choose appropriate questions)
- Feedback needs to be used – allow time for this

## THINKING ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE ARE LEARNING

- What did you find easy about learning to ...?
- What are you most pleased with about learning to...?
- What really made you think/did you find difficult while you were learning to...?
- What helped when something got tricky?
- What do you need more help with?
- How would you do things differently next time?
- What can you do now that you couldn't before?
- What have you learnt that is new about...?
- How do you think you can use what you've learnt today in the future?
- How would you change this activity for another class?

Choose 1 or 2 and add the words of the Learning Intention

**DRAFT questioning framework being developed as part of  
Wigan Arts. Thinking and Reasoning Skills (ARTS) Project**

(Please give due acknowledgment to Lorna Pout if using in any form)

Questions Creating the right atmosphere

What do you think?  
Why do you think that?  
How do you know?  
Do you have a reason?  
Can you be sure?  
Is there another way?  
What do you think happens next?

Questions Developing responses.

What reasons do you have for saying that?  
Do you agree with this?  
Why do you agree/disagree?  
What do you mean by that?  
Is what you are saying consistent with what you first said/thought?  
Are you and s/he contradicting each other?  
Are there any alternatives?

Questions Encouraging clarification of thought.

What I think you are saying is...  
Are you saying that?  
I get the impression that...  
So you see it as...  
As I understand it, you think...  
So from the point of view...  
Can we say it like this...?  
Am I correct in assuming you think...?

Questions Consolidating thoughts, constructing new meaning

Can you sum up your arguments/ideas/views?  
So you think these points.....are important?  
Which points do you want to emphasise?  
If you were explaining it to someone else who is away today, what would you say?  
What are the most important parts of you argument/ideas/views?

Questions pushing thinking on

In view of what you said before, do you now still think that?  
The implications of what you have said are...  
Could your meaning/idea be taken in this other way..?  
What if I misinterpret what you are saying and think that..?  
Are you also implying that...?  
Doesn't what you have said also mean that.....?

**CLASSROOM DIALOGUE**

**Questioning:**

Questions that focus attention:	Did you notice? Have you seen? How many? How long?
Questions that seek clarification:	What do you mean by that? Can you explain further? Can you give an example? Can you put it another way?
Questions that invite inquiry:	What do we need to know? How can we find out? What would happen if?
Questions that seek reasons:	Why did you say that? What are your reasons? What is your evidence? Why do you think that?
<b>Analysing the question:</b>	What do you mean by...?
<b>Rephrasing the question:</b>	Are you saying...?
<b>Turning the question back to the pupil:</b>	What do you think?
<b>Asking an additional question:</b>	I wonder whether..?
<b>Suggesting a line of enquiry:</b>	Perhaps we could...?



## QUESTIONING

- A good question enhances thinking and learning in the classroom. A Question should be an invitation to think.
- 2 Criteria for questions:
  - 1) Reproductive: About information/Do you already know it?
  - 2) Productive: Causes thinking/Do you have to think about it?
  
- Why is 'x' a case of 'y is a useful structure – an invitation to think – not about information? Example: Why is a square a rectangle?
- What is the impact on learning of whole class question time/ Why are you asking the questions? / Do the same children dominate?
- Who is doing the thinking in the classroom?
- Hands up only to ask a question, not to answer one. Everybody should be ready with an answer even if it's I'm not sure...
- Rules for questioning might include: I'm not looking for an answer; I'm looking for an explanation.
- Both teachers and children need to feel comfortable in exploring wrong answers.
- Wait time can improve confidence: many children feel anxious if they are rushed to give an answer.
- How often do you ask a question and answer it yourself? Do you rush to closure?
- Are children encouraged to pose questions? Questions can be generated with peers.
- Is questioning 'ping-ponging' between teacher and child? (Like spokes in a wheel: T-C; T-C; T-C; T-C etc) or are children encouraged to respond to other children's answers, e.g. I agree/disagree because...
- Is question time competition time?
- Do you correct wrong answers?
- An alternative to questioning is to use statements, e.g.
  - Could you say a little more about...?
  - Talk to your partner and give me three examples of...
  - You have 3 minutes to write 3 things you remember about...