



Our Lady's High School
SCHOOL POLICY and ARRANGEMENTS
LEARNING AND TEACHING

Reference No. D17

Produced / Revised: November 2003

AIMS / RATIONALE

Continuing to improve the effectiveness and quality of Learning and Teaching is central to the school's commitment to raising achievement.

Individual programmes and strategies which exemplify or support aspects of school arrangements for learning and teaching are contained in a wide range of other individual policy statements such as those on Raising Achievement, Equal Opportunities, Inclusion, Support for Learning, Curriculum and so on.

School policy on Learning and Teaching aims to:

- Provide a framework for departmental policies and arrangements on learning and teaching.
- Provide realistic and practical guidance for classroom teachers
- Emphasise the centrality of effective learning and teaching to all school activities.
- Promote the sharing of good school practice.
- Ensure equality and consistency of school experience for all learners.

To support these aims:

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- Each member of staff should reflect on his / her teaching practice.
- Departments should evaluate their teaching practice systematically by using the Quality indicators contained in "How Good is Our School".
- The school should establish a mechanism for the discussion and sharing of good practice between departments and across curricular areas.
- The school should continue to review policy and practice on the provision of support for learning and the deployment of resources.

MAIN ELEMENTS OF POLICY, ORGANISATION & IMPLEMENTATION

Strategies

The school should make use of existing monitoring and evaluating structures to place effective learning and teaching at the heart of all activities. This can be done through:

- The Development Planning Process
 - School / departments identify relevant Quality Indicators / Quality Pointers of good practice in learning and teaching, for example, the variety of learning and teaching methods used.
 - Individual teachers examine the balance of their lessons between expository, discursive, enquiry and expressive activity
 - Individual teachers reflect on their classroom practice
 - Departmental leaders lead departmental discussion on self evaluation
 - Departments review policy and practice
 - Results of review inform whole school evaluation of an aspect of learning and teaching such as that contained in the school's Standards and Quality Report.
- Senior Management Team links with departments
 - SMT members should focus on highlighting good practice observed during their liaison activities, for example, departmental planning, teaching, assessment procedures, recording and monitoring.
 - These departmental links form a crucial part of the whole school quality assurance process and SMT members should be proactive in identifying and disseminating good practice.
 - Reports on departmental meetings should form part of the agenda for departmental meetings and discussion of interesting initiatives and good practice could be discussed and disseminated amongst departments.
- Support for Learning and Equal Opportunities

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- Departments should examine their own policies in these areas, since effective learning and teaching cannot take place unless clear and unambiguous guidelines are in existence.
 - SMT link personnel should collate departmental responses which will help in the continuing process of reviewing school policies.
 - Where clear, workable policies exist in individual departments, these can be shared with other departments. SMT liaison staff again have an important role here.
- Common approach to common skills
 - Departments teaching particular skills or groups of skills should be identified through SMT links and given opportunities to collaborate so that, for example, a common nomenclature could be used in the case of similar skills and thus avoiding a situation where certain skills are 'over taught'.

Methodology

An effective whole school policy on learning and teaching should make us ask ourselves 'What is effective learning and teaching?' To encourage this:

- Individuals and departments should take account of recent publications and research regarding effective learning and teaching.
- Whole school quality assurance structures should be used to provide opportunities for this to happen.
- Individuals and departments should discuss recent publications and research into motivation and learning styles.
- Departments should examine the range and variety of teaching methods through referring to the quality indicators contained in 'How Good is Our School'.
- Departments with less experienced colleagues should encourage them to discuss educational theory and practice. Enthusiasm should be encouraged and harnessed, not squashed!
- Departments should ensure that programmes of study are matched to the needs of individual pupils and teaching groups. This is not the exclusive task of specialist learning support staff.
- Departments should ensure that they are flexible enough to recognise the needs of individual children in individual situations so that, for example, a

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child's ability to understand a specific concept should not depend upon his / her ability to read a question or to write an answer.

- Individuals and departments should make effective use of ICT.
- Differentiation at all stages and in all courses is the most effective single method of matching classroom activity to different learners' needs.
- Differentiation occurs when there is planned intervention by the teacher with the intention of maximising the achievements of pupils based on their differing individual needs. Differentiation can be described as having five main components i.e. Resources, Tasks, Response, Support, Group Structure.
- The most important prerequisite of effective differentiation is good and accurate knowledge of the pupil. This relies upon cross stage liaison, links within the department, links across the whole school and home / school liaison.
- Resources should:
 - have appropriate readability level.
 - be easy to use.
 - be well designed.
 - consist of a wide variety of forms that include modern technology.
 - have schemes of work that indicate a planned use of available resources and that show progression and continuity within the curriculum.
 - be kept in well managed storage and retrieval systems.
 - prepare pupils for the methods of study that they will be expected to use.
 - build study skills into the theme or topic work.
- Tasks should aim to:
 - show variety throughout a theme or topic and within a lesson if possible.
 - be matched to the pupils' abilities.
 - have a structure that enables the pupils to stay on task.
 - identify possible outcomes.
 - match the pupils' interests.
 - allow for some degree of choice to be made by the pupil.
 - allow the teacher to build a learning route through a topic.
- The Response should:
 - make task/topic objectives clear to pupils.
 - make assessment criteria clear to the pupils.
 - create an atmosphere where pupils discuss their own and each others work.

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- be given to pupils in small groups.
 - allow for individual action plans to be built for the pupils.
 - reflect what the pupil has achieved and consider the pupil's previous achievements.
- Support can be:
 - from other adults and pupils.
 - from the teacher.
 - from appropriate resources.
 - a celebration of achievement.
 - by teaching co-operatively.
 - Group structure can support differentiation if:
 - we examine structure of the teaching groups.
 - we teach pupils in small groups.
 - we are flexible within the group when setting the task and responding to individual's needs.
 - we allow individual work.
 - we tutor small groups of pupils.

Climate and Ethos

Teachers and departments should strive to create classroom situations which:

- Value all learners equally
- Create feelings of security and discipline
- Encourage self belief and self worth among all learners
- Encourage and praise all achievement
- Recognise differences in abilities, personalities and preferred learning styles
- encourage all learners to achieve their potential.

Teachers should always:

- Encourage children to recognise differences between themselves and others
- Help to develop social skills which include showing responsibility towards others

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- Make children aware that they can influence others in a positive way by their own attitudes
- Create learning opportunities which allow more able pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and less able pupils to achieve specific, manageable, achievable, realistic and time contained targets (SMART approach)
- Encourage active learning
- Make time to learning support specialists including the educational psychologist and members of the area network support team.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Respective responsibilities for SMT, Department Leaders and teaching staff are specifically identified at various points in the section above.

RESOURCES & STAFF DEVELOPMENT

This should take place through:

- Quality whole school in-service presentations on aspects of learning and teaching
- Professional Review and Development
- Continuous Professional Development
- Systems created for cross-curricular collaborative projects
- Adequate resourcing for projects and initiatives

MONITORING & EVALUATION

This should take place through:

- Existing structures such as the development planning process and SMT links
- Regular meetings of Departmental Leaders to discuss learning and teaching strategies and developments
- Designated member of SMT to co-ordinate policy and have responsibility for

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evaluating its effectiveness

- Departmental and school reviews of aspects of learning and teaching
- Departmental and school quality assurance procedures
- The application in all monitoring and evaluating procedures of the quality indicators and evidence-gathering techniques contained in "How Good is Our School".

SUPPORTING ADVICE & GUIDELINES

- North Lanarkshire Education Department Standard Circular: D2 Raising Achievement for All
- Raising Achievement for All: North Lanarkshire Education Department
- Learning and Teaching Policy: North Lanarkshire Council Education Department
- How Good is Our School: School Self-Evaluation through the use of Quality Indicators SOEID
- Achievement for All SOEID
- Improving Achievement in Scottish Schools SOEID
- Climate for Learning SCCC
- Teaching for Effective Learning SCCC
- Effective Learning and Teaching series HMIe
- Standards and Quality Report series HMIe
- The Learning File - Teachers Guide

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