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1. Introduction

Of Bearsden Academy's ten "Aims" the following make specific reference to Learning and Teaching :

- To maintain a positive learning environment in which all pupils have the opportunity to fulfil their potential in all aspects of their development.
- To provide learning and teaching of the highest quality in a supportive climate of teamwork in which the contribution of all staff – teaching and non-teaching – is valued.
- To make effective use of participative management , school development planning and self-evaluation to improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise levels of attainment.

The Scottish Executive in "*A Curriculum for Excellence*" states, as one of its four purposes for education, that "all young people should become successful learners". Learning and Teaching, therefore, is at the heart of Bearsden Academy's agenda with the focus on engaging pupils through personalising learning. This policy provides a framework for such learning outlining :

- The principles that underpin effective learning and teaching
- The characteristics of effective learning and teaching
- The various roles and responsibilities of those involved

This policy supports all other school policies, specifically those on Support for Learning, Assessment and Reporting, Homework and Study and Behaviour Management.

2. Rationale

Schools, parents and society care that young people succeed in terms of attaining the knowledge, skills and qualifications required for a personally rewarding life, productive employment and effective citizenship. Equally they care that young people develop into healthy, fair-minded, considerate and responsible human beings. The school experience should play a very big role in this development.

Rationale for the Secondary Curriculum, Scottish CCC, 1998

This introductory statement, though taken from a document from 1998, still captures, we feel, the five National Priorities in Education : *Achievement and Attainment; Framework for Learning; Inclusion and Equality; Values and citizenship* and *Learning for Life* that currently underpin the Scottish Executive's education policies.

The benefit from school education which children and young people gain will vary according to their individual needs and circumstances. However, all children and young people benefit from school education when they can access a curriculum which supports their learning and personal development; where teaching and support from others meet their needs; where they can learn with, and from, their peers and when their learning is supported in the home and their wider community.

Draft Code of Practice, Education (Scotland) Act 2004 – Scottish Executive

The main measure of a school experience is the quality of its learning and teaching. Schools play a very significant part in encouraging the respect and desire for learning that should accompany every child into adult life. At Bearsden Academy, effective learning is grounded in effective teaching. Learners and teachers are committed to excellence and to the raising of standards, thus ensuring continuous school improvement.

An important objective for us as teachers is to personalise the learning experiences of our pupils in as many dimensions as we can, for example through a flexible curriculum, the use of ICT and the learning and teaching strategies that we adopt.

This policy aims to support the areas of learning where teachers can exert the most influence and make a difference by encouraging purposeful and focused learning. Recent research has increased our awareness of how and why learning takes place, and these findings are also taken into consideration in this policy.

This policy recognises :

- the important role that the staff, the parent and each individual pupil has to play in ensuring that effective learning takes place.
- the diversity in learning styles and strategies that helps all those involved in the learning process to support these strategies.
- that motivation and high expectations, working together, are key factors in successful learning and indicates differing strategies that teachers can use to enhance motivation and expectations.
- the links between effective learning, high self-esteem and good relationships and encourages educators to foster these links.
- that effective learning and teaching promotes a positive ethos and a climate of good behaviour which are essential for effective learning to take place.
- the various ways to make learning and teaching more effective, bringing in current educational thinking including Assessment Is For Learning, ICT and Personal Learning Planning.

3. The Basic Principles of Effective Learning

- Expectations are important. Expectations which are too low are likely to provide insufficient challenge whilst expectations which are too high can lead to discouragement by failure.
- Self-esteem is an important factor. If we feel good about ourselves, we are more likely to be motivated to learn.
- We learn most effectively when we think things through for ourselves. Learning goes beyond simply acquiring new information and adding it to our existing knowledge. We need to make sense of new information by using our existing knowledge and modifying, updating and rethinking our own ideas in the light of this new information.
- We need to practise using new ideas in a range of contexts.
- Meaningful homework is a key strategy which supports effective learning.

Tell me and I'll forget
Show me and I may not remember
Involve me and I'll understand

"How smart are you ?" is an irrelevant question. A more powerful question is, "HOW are you smart ?"

We all like praise, when it is honestly given and deserved.

Robert Fisher, *Teaching Children to Learn*,

Teaching is a messy business. Children do not learn in easy linear steps.

Sir Ron Dearing, 1992

- By increasing our awareness of HOW we learn effectively, we can increase the success we have.
- Success on a regular basis is important. We are more likely to learn when we are motivated by previous success.

4. Teaching for Effective Learning

- We should be genuine and consistent with praise.
- We should help pupils to look for and form links between topics and subjects to make further links with their existing knowledge and experience.
- We should encourage pupils to explore other possibilities and try not to be uncomfortable with uncertainty. If we think there is only one answer, then we will only find one.
- We should break the learning up into small steps but also give pupils an overview of their learning to help them see where the learning will take them.

Children esteem teachers who can explain things clearly, who are slightly strict rather than overly severe or permissive; scrupulously fair in their use of rewards and punishments; interested in them as individuals and with a sense of humour not based on sarcasm or humiliation.

Ted Wragg The Observer, 1993

Outstanding teachers create an excellent classroom climate and achieve superior pupil progress largely by displaying more professional characteristics at higher levels of sophistication within a very structured learning environment.

Hay McBer Research into Teacher Effectiveness, 2000

- We should create opportunities for interaction and discussion between individuals, small groups and the class as a whole.
- We should ensure that worksheets and other resources are used to provide time for discussion and interaction, rather than a substitute for it.
- We should have good classroom management outlining expected standards of behaviour and apply them consistently.
- We should reflect on and learn from what we do as teachers.
- We should be aware that some pupils will require additional support from Support for Learning specialists.
- We, as teachers, should be lifelong learners keeping up to date with educational developments through our own continuing professional development.

Young people deserve teachers who have the confidence to learn and to improve, just as teachers deserve schools which help them to learn and improve. Our society needs teachers who are clear, confident and proud about what they are doing and can explain why. Reflecting on practice can help teachers to establish what they believe to be right, and to be able to articulate it. It can also help them to challenge their own thinking and to admit that sometimes they be wrong and others may be right.

Teaching for Effective Learning. SCCC, 1996

5. Assessment is for Learning

Learners learn best when they:

- understand clearly what they are trying to learn and know what is expected of them
- are given feedback about the quality of their work
- are given advice about how to go about making improvements
- are fully involved in deciding what needs to be done next and who can give them help if they need it

Assessment is for Learning Programme, 2002

With reference to Bearsden Academy's **Assessment and Reporting Policy** (August 2003), we recognise that *summative assessment* is used to confirm pupil progress and is a key feature required for recording pupil progress and reporting to parents. Additionally we endorse the national Assessment Is for Learning Programme and promote *formative assessment* as a strategy to enhance effective learning and teaching.

Formative assessment is assessment for learning. This type of assessment is ongoing and involves the teacher and pupil working together to improve the learning that takes place. It includes:

- sharing the learning intention with the child
- quality feedback from teachers and other pupils
- ongoing review and reflection of progress being made

Black and Wiliam (1998) recognise that implementation of formative assessment strategies must be planned "through sustained programmes of professional development and support."

To promote effective learning and teaching effective managers should :

- ensure that staff make use of formative assessment strategies and facilitate continuing professional development as appropriate.
- provide time and resources for staff to familiarise and enhance skills in employing formative assessment strategies
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies employed

Effective teachers should make use of a range of strategies to support formative assessment.

To help motivate learners, teachers should :

- emphasise real progress and achievement rather than failure
- praise effort rather than ability
- emphasise progress against previous personal best and avoid comparisons with others
- be aware of the effects that comments, marks and grades can have on learners' confidence and self-esteem

To promote effective learning teachers should :

- be clear with learners about what they are being asked to learn and how they will know if they have been successful
- help learners become more aware of how they learn in addition to what they are learning
- help learners to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses
- give learners guidance on how to improve and opportunities to do so

6. Exploiting Technology for Education Purposes

“Good ICT is a powerful tool to support and transform learning and teaching”

Ambitious Excellent Schools, Scottish Executive, 2004

ICT is no longer considered as incidental to the curriculum or an optional classroom activity. It has an increasingly important presence within overall learning and teaching strategies and schools have the flexibility to use ICT in conventional and innovative ways to meet their aims and objectives. This includes how ICT

- an influence and shape the curriculum
- offers opportunities to extend or enhance the curriculum
- brings with it the potential for new approaches to teaching
- can help in the planning and structuring of tasks.

Information and Communications Technology Guide for Teachers and Managers
Scottish Executive

Exploiting Technology for Education Purposes (ETfEP) sets out a series of strategies to promote the integration of ICT into Learning and Teaching in Bearsden Academy. The programme attempts to address staff training issues and to inform teaching practice, through the promotion of collegiality and the sharing of good practice.

The use of ICT has developed in different ways to meet the needs of learners in different curricular areas. The use of ICT can

- help to personalise learning
- help learners be creative
- be a useful aid to problem solving
- provide ready access to a world of knowledge and research
- improve the quality of presentation.

To promote the learning of pupils using ICT **effective managers** should :

- embed the use of ICT by developing and promoting a vision for the application and use of ICT across the curriculum;
- be willing to consider relevant re-structuring of approaches to learning and teaching
- provide appropriate professional development in the use of ICT for all staff.

To promote the learning of pupils using ICT **effective teachers** should;

use ICT selectively and appropriately to enliven the teaching process, to motivate pupils and to achieve positive attitudes to learning

- provide pupils with good opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, both in small groups and individually
- identify aspects of coursework where individuals needs can be met more effectively through the appropriate use of ICT
- use their ICT skills to access the wealth of resources now available online.

It is generally recognised that ICT has a role to play in motivating pupils to learn. However, its full impact on learning and teaching is still the subject of research and debate.

The **ETfEP** programme is a fluid and evolving series of strategies which have at their core informing teaching methodology and promoting the personalisation of pupils' learning through the use of Information and Communication Technologies.

7. Enterprise in Education

Enterprise in education provides 'real life' contexts for teaching and learning. It also increases the personal relevance of schooling by developing the understanding and experience of roles which the individual may play in the future.

... effective approaches to learning and teaching will make a direct contribution to pupils' experience in enterprise in education.

HGIOS, QIs in Enterprise in Education, HMle, 2004

Education for Work in Schools (Scottish Executive, 2000) identified for the first time that not only should Scottish school pupils experience enterprise activities within a broad programme of careers education and work experience, but also that enterprising approaches to learning and teaching should permeate the curriculum.

Enterprising approaches to learning and teaching include :

- strategies which support the development of the core skills of numeracy, literacy, problem solving and ICT;
- strategies which support the personal and social development of pupils;
- relevant, 'real life' content in different areas and subjects of the curriculum;
- pupil participation in enterprise activities which are explicitly entrepreneurial in nature, and in which success is the result of 'hands on' participation.

Enterprising approaches to learning and teaching should be dynamic, creative and encourage innovation. Equally, enterprise in education comprises definable and measurable education objectives which include; the quality of courses and programmes, pupil attainment and how the needs of pupils are met.

To develop an enterprising approach to learning and teaching, **effective managers** should;

- ensure that development plans reflect the national and local priorities for Enterprise in Education;
- ensure that course contexts reflect pupils' interests, previous experience and future development;
- ensure that the learning experiences of pupils are relevant, motivating and challenging and support the development of core skills;
- monitor pupil progress, attainment and achievement.

To promote the development of enterprising skills in pupils, **effective teachers** should;

encourage pupils to take responsibility for, and be active in, their own learning, being able to work without close supervision;

- provide frequent opportunities for pupils to think for themselves, reflect on ideas, issues and experiences and ensure that pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve;
 - develop opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in a variety of circumstances involving groups of differing composition and size.
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8. Summary

- Effective learning and teaching is dependent on partnerships involving pupils, staff and parents where each has a role and all must work together if learners are to achieve their full potential. This policy focuses on the roles of pupils and staff.
- Effective learning and teaching is dependent on an ethos where learners feel valued and motivated, expectations are important and there is use of positive praise.
- Effective learning and teaching is dependent on a climate of good behaviour where there is a clear code of conduct and pupils are aware of their responsibilities.
- Effective learning and teaching should be flexible, taking account of preferred learning and teaching styles. These are :
 - Visual
 - Auditory
 - Linguistic
 - Kinaesthetic

Teachers should be aware of this in their lesson planning, lesson delivery and lesson conclusion.

- Effective learning and teaching is enhanced by using Assessment Is For Learning strategies. These, along with an audit of current departmental practice have been issued as a supplement to this policy.
 - Effective learning and teaching is enhanced by integrating ICT into the learning and teaching process providing opportunities to meet individual needs.
 - Effective learning and teaching is enhanced by using an enterprising approach where pupils are actively engaged in their own learning and there are opportunities for individual, group and class learning to take place.
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APPENDIX 1 : Learning Styles

We acquire, process and use information in different ways and at different rates. As individuals, we employ a number of learning styles. Four of the most common learning styles are :

- Visual
- Auditory
- Linguistic
- Kinaesthetic

Visual learners remember things by seeing and tend to be less distracted by noise. They will benefit from :

- having a clear view of the teacher in order to see body language and facial expression
- using visual materials such as pictures, charts, maps, graphs etc
- where multi-media is used such as Smart Boards, Power Point etc
- illustrating ideas as a picture or brainstorming bubble before writing them down
- taking notes or being given handouts
- using colour to highlight important points in texts
- reading illustrated books
- visualising information as a picture to aid memory

Auditory learners understand best by hearing information. They will benefit from :

- participating in class discussions/debates
- discussing their ideas
- making speeches and presentations
- reading text aloud
- using a tape recorder during lessons instead of taking notes
- creating musical jingles/mnemonics to aid memory
- teachers using verbal analogies and story telling to demonstrate our points

Linguistic learners learn best when using the written and spoken word. They may well talk themselves through learning situations and use written notes, acronyms, mnemonics, rhymes, colour coding and highlighter pens to facilitate their learning. They will benefit from :

- working from books and other text-based resources
- listening to information
- seeing instructions on the whiteboard
- having/making lists of instructions or important information
- having quietness to study
- making notes using keywords and phrases, especially when information is presented to them pictorially or diagrammatically

Kinaesthetic learners learn best by a hands-on approach. They will benefit from :

- there being a number of different activities during a period
- moving around to learn to new things
- working in a standing position
- using bright colours to highlight reading material
- illustrating their work with posters
- skimming through the resources to get a rough idea of what it is about before settling down to undertake the work

To know and not act is not yet to know. *Wan Yang Ming*

Being Aware of Learning Styles

What if our preferred learning style, and consequently our preferred teaching style, do not match the preferred learning style of our pupils ?

It is important that we consider this when planning our lessons. We should try to create opportunities for each type of learning to be targeted during a lesson.

Teachers are important and make a difference. The quality of individual teachers is the single most crucial factor in promoting effective learning in schools.

Teaching for Effective Learning

The people best placed to make judgements about the learning needs of individual young people are those who work with them most closely. Within a framework of clear national standards and local authority support , teachers and other professionals in schools must have the freedom to exercise their professional judgement to deliver excellent learning and teaching. We will act to give them that freedom.

Ambitious Excellent Schools Scottish Executive,

Lesson Planning We should aim to :

- Create as many open-ended situations as we can to allow individual approaches and responses by pupils.
- Provide challenge and opportunities for all to learn at an appropriate pace.
- Make the best use of available resources.
- Build in flexibility to take account of the reality of the learning environment and the needs of individual learners.

Lesson Delivery

- Give pupils an overview of the content of the lesson or series of lessons.
- Relate the main objectives of each lesson to prior learning.
- Give clear explanations and instructions of what is to be done.
- Create opportunities for the pupils to discuss aspects of the work and the different ways they can approach it.
- Maximise opportunities to work directly with learners in whole class, group and individual situations.

Lesson Conclusion

- Ask the pupils to tell or show you what they have learned.
- Recap the objectives of the lesson and highlight the learning outcomes by the use of diagrams or tables.
- Explain what the next lesson will build on.

APPENDIX 2 : Formative Assessment Strategies— some practical examples

Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria

SMART 'small step' learning intentions

Learning intentions focus on the learning to be achieved by engaging with a task. Broad learning intentions are usually too general to give a clear understanding of the specific learning involved. Use SMART (Small, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Limited) criteria to set learning intentions that focus on specific things that children can achieve. *For example, We are learning to recognise multiples of 2, 5 and 10*

'Whole Task' learning intentions

Whole task learning intentions should not be too broad. They should focus the learner.

For example, We are learning to:

- *write a mystery story using mysterious phrases and suspense*
- *devise a character using descriptive words and phrases*

Invite pupils to discuss what the success criteria might be

Involving pupils in the process of identifying the success criteria to use in assessing their response to a specific learning intention can be very useful in helping them to engage with their own learning. Success criteria should relate closely to the learning intention.

Develop success criteria into a self-assessment checklist

As pupils are introduced to peer- and self-assessment, they will probably need some support. One way of helping them without taking a lot of teacher time in class is to create checklists that pupils can use on their own. There are different ways of doing this:

- **Create a checklist:** List each of the success criteria with a box next to it for pupils to mark if they think it has been achieved. Teachers can also use the evidence produced to check on the effectiveness of their own teaching. Checklists can be good ways of introducing formative assessment into subjects like Maths and Modern Languages where answers are often regarded as right or wrong.
- **Create a Scoring Scale:** where appropriate, create a scoring scale next to each criterion you want to use in assessing a piece of work. Use a scale appropriate to each criterion being assessed, for example 1-5 or 1-10. Pupils can then use the scale to assess that criterion.
- **Develop descriptions:** write a series of general paragraphs to describe the overall strengths and weaknesses that will be apparent for different degrees of success in meeting the criteria for a given task. These could be linked to relative estimates of success, for example, exceeded success criteria, met success criteria, fell short of success criteria. An opportunity to make specific comments can be used as part of this process. Such descriptions can be used in conjunction with a scoring scale.

Promoting Self and Peer Assessment

Traffic Lights

Traffic lighting is a simple but powerful way of signalling how children perceive their own learning. One specific application for traffic lights is in evaluating strengths and weaknesses to plan revision. Pupils use the colour on the traffic light to assess a list of key word or topics on which a test may be set. By doing this pupils can identify the areas where they feel learning is secure, which they mark in green, and where they need to concentrate their efforts, which they mark in amber or red. These traffic lights then form the basis of a revision plan. Pupils can identify questions in past papers that test their red and amber areas.

Use peer assessment to check homework

Work done at home can provide ideal material for assessment by other pupils. This often helps both the author of the homework and the pupil assessing it. It can involve anything from Correcting a set of short answers (with or without a checklist) to more complex assessment procedures.

Get pupils to prepare their own test questions

Research suggests that pupils who revise for tests by preparing and answering their own test questions perform better in unseen tests than those who prepare in more conventional ways. Preparing your own test questions calls for and develops an overview of the topic so pupils need to have a clear understanding of the topic material.

Mark Less to Achieve More

Comment Only Marking

Research shows that giving pupils a mark or a grade leads pupils to put more importance on the mark than on the teacher's comment. The best strategy is to give marks as seldom as possible while children are learning and use only comments to help direct future efforts.

Challenge more able children – don't give them a grade

Research tells us that grade only marking appeals to the ego while comment only marking makes learners think about the task. To avoid bright pupils becoming complacent, give them a plus, minus or equals depending on how it compares with the last piece of work they did.

Model good work with the whole class

Sharing learning intention and success criteria is an essential forerunner to effective marking. Spend time marking pieces of work with the whole class. Using an OHP of a piece of work, you can help a group see more clearly the ways in which specific learning intentions and success criteria are used to evaluate a piece of work.

Two Stars and a Wish

Learning is most likely when pupils are engaged and motivated. It is therefore important to emphasise the positive when assessing pupil's work. Two Stars and a Wish is a very effective way of accentuating the positive. Teachers make two favourable comments (two stars) about the work and then identify the most important thing they think could be improved.

Generate Good Classroom Discussions

Leave more wait time

You should leave at least three seconds after asking a question before accepting a response. This emphasises that thinking takes time and effort and you believe that the pupil can do it. It also acknowledges that the pupil, not the teacher, should be doing the thinking.

Take an answer round the class

Weak or incomplete answers are good starting points for effective classroom discussions. If a pupil gives an answer that needs improvement, don't respond directly. Gather some answers from other pupils. Bring these answers back to the first pupil and ask that pupil to identify the best answer.

No hands up rule

This can completely change the dynamic in the classroom. Everyone is expected to answer at any time, even if it is an "I don't know".

Further Reading/Information

Listed below are ideas for further reading on some of the main ideas discussed in the policy. It is by no means exhaustive.

General

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk>

Website of the Scottish Executive. Gives details of all recent and past Scottish Executive publications, many of which are available to view online. Look under publications.

<http://tip.psychology.org/>

Useful reference site that gives definitions, overviews and references for many of the main educational concepts that you may come across. Click on 'learning concepts'.

<http://www.tes.co.uk>

Archive section allows search on previous articles on educational issues.

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk>

Based around the curriculum in England, but some good information and resources on a variety of areas.

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk>

Government funded website offering information and resources on many areas, with a focus on ICT.

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk>

Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (1996)

Teaching for Effective Learning

Dundee: Scottish CCC

Extremely readable overview of many areas relating to learning and teaching, including suggestions for further reading.

ICT in Education

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk>

Has many articles on integrating ICT. Part of its remit is to 'to encourage the creative and effective use of ICT in education'. Incorporates the National Grid for Learning Scotland, a Scottish Executive initiative that funds and supports projects which bring the benefits of information and communications technologies (ICT) to learning, teaching and community development in Scotland.

Learning Styles

Like personality and intelligence, there are many different theories and approaches to the concept of learning styles.

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk>

Search on 'learning styles'.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/tutors/expertcolumn/learningstyles/>

Readable and practical discussion on using VAK learning styles in teaching.

<http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/uploads/Current%20thinking%20-%20learnin.doc>

Long address, but well worth it. Clear and concise explanations of five of the main learning styles theories.

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachinginengland/detail.cfm?id=523>

Discussion of using VAK in teaching.

Banks, F. & Mayes, A.S. (eds) (2001)

Early Professional Development for Teachers

David Fulton Publishers: London

Smith, Alistair. (2001)

Accelerated Learning in Practice.

Stafford: Network Educational Press Ltd.

Smith, Alistair. (1996)

Accelerated Learning in the Classroom.

Stafford: Network Educational Press Ltd.

Good books covering many areas of learning including learning styles.

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