Learning, Teaching and Assessment
At
Forge Integrated Primary School

Policies on Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The purpose of this policy document is to outline how the school intends to work towards fulfilling its aims through teaching, learning and assessment.

Teaching and Learning at Forge
We aim to create an environment that allows pupils to feel safe, and experience an atmosphere that fosters engagement and a willingness to give things a try. In order to progress our children must be encouraged to have the confidence to risk mistakes and develop the resilience that is needed to develop competence in basic skills.

Methods – Fitness for Purpose
At Forge we recognise that there is no one method of Teaching and Learning that will suit every purpose. The key to meeting the needs of differing individuals and delivering a varied curriculum is flexibility and in choosing the teaching/learning style that best suits a given situation.

Accordingly, teachers will the following methods in order to deliver lessons

- Whole Class Teaching – particularly when introducing a topic, practical activity or explaining an area of learning
- Group Teaching Activities – This may be to aim at an ability group, to use resources effectively or to develop collaborative and social abilities.
- Individual Teaching – Usually to teach for a very specific need or purpose – music tuition or special needs being typical examples
- Subject specific teaching – in areas such as numeracy where very specific skills and competences need to be addressed this is often the most appropriate approach
- Topic Work – a cross curricular topic can allow children to develop a variety of skills and explore subject matter relevant to a number of curricular areas. This is a method of teaching and learning that Forge has a long tradition of using.

Specialist Teachers and Teacher Specialism
Most staff will have had a particular emphasis during their training or may have developed a degree of specialist experience during the course of their career. The school will use this to enhance teaching and learning as appropriate either through direct teaching or through curriculum leadership.
We also utilise the skills of specialist teachers and coaches to enhance learning and the extent to which such provision is available is determined by need and the resources available in terms of time and finance.

Curriculum

The School will deliver the Northern Ireland Curriculum. In addition the school will work towards enhancing the learning experiences of our pupils through provision of activities that contribute to their holistic development and/or introduce and develop aspects of learning that may not be part of the statutory curriculum but are deemed worthy by the school.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for teaching and learning lies with the Principal and the Board of Governors.

The Principal

- Leads the development of teaching and learning
- Leads the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning
- Enables staff to avail of relevant training and pursue professional development
- Manages resources effectively
- Works with all stakeholders to address whole school development and the aims of the school

Coordinators/Curriculum Leaders

- Work with the Principal and staff to encourage development of their subject throughout the school
- Support colleagues in planning and implementing the curriculum
- Attend relevant training courses and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate
- Contribute to the school development plan.
- In consultation with other staff develop action plans yearly and oversees the implementation of them
- Regularly audit and update shred resources
- Stay abreast of new developments and practices work with the Principal/SMT to inform and arrange relevant INSET when necessary

Class Teachers

- Implementation of the Northern Ireland Curriculum in their Class and with other timetabled classes
- Identifying learning needs including special needs and working with the relevant staff to cater for them.
- Planning and deciding on appropriate learning methods and styles in delivering activities and lessons.
- Asking for assistance from senior/specialist colleagues if needed.
- Delivering the aspects of the school's RE programme that they have allocated to them.
- Identifying resources needed and renewing them annually from allocated requisition budget.
- Ensure all pupils have equal opportunity to learn and develop their skills and knowledge in an enjoyable and non-threatening environment.

Teaching and Learning - Special Educational Needs
The school has a detailed SEN policy and this is managed by the SENCO. All staff have a responsibility to manage the needs of the SEN pupils in their care and liaise with all relevant parties in order to help pupils with SEN access the curriculum and achieve their potential.

Teaching and Learning without Bias
Forge supports an Anti Bias Curriculum which means we will avoid actions portrayals that will lead children to develop negative stereotypical notions about gender, race or disability in terms of capabilities and roles in school and in the wider context of society.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching and Learning

The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning at Forge IPS is the responsibility of the Principal and the School Management Team.

Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures

PRSD
The school has a PRSD policy in place and the teaching staff at Forge set targets and are observed by the Principal or a member of the SMT. The work of the Principal is monitored by the Board of Governors.

SMT Monitoring and Evaluation 'Book Scoops'
The SMT ask staff to send them with a range of written work from pupils on given topics on a number of occasions throughout the school year. The quality and standards of work are discussed and issues identified are noted and an appropriate member of the SMT will talk to the relevant teacher to offer guidance and assistance if necessary. Likewise, examples of good practice will also be mentioned to staff.

Scrutiny of Assessment Data by SMT
The SMT will look at assessment data to identify children who may require assistance for Special Educational Needs and to identify areas that require action planning for improvement on a Whole School, Key Stage and individual class basis. This will feed into action planning by Literacy and Numeracy coordinators and individual teachers. The Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators work with staff to monitor assessment data in Numeracy/Literacy and action plan accordingly.

Cross Communication of Information
Key staff at Forge will communicate concerns and difficulties to relevant colleagues whether this is to the SENCO regarding a child's progress or through a coordinator to the Principal to identify a training need or resourcing issue.

Principal Cover/Classroom Visits
On a number of occasions throughout the year the Principal will teach all classes to cover for teachers writing IEP's for pupils who are on the SEN register and also to facilitate teachers attending training or carrying out administrative or development tasks.
Teachers will also sometimes invite the Principal or a senior colleague to visit their class to look at or talk about an ongoing area of study.
These periods provide an opportunity for the Principal to engage with pupils and gain an insight through observation and discussion into the ongoing work in the classrooms and the regular teaching and learning that is taking place.
If the Principal identifies issues during these periods it will be discussed with the class teacher in a constructive manner in order work towards a positive solution. Positive aspects of work that are observed during these periods will also be flagged up to teachers.

Issues about Teaching and Learning Brought to the School by Parents
Through our twice yearly parent meetings, parent information evening and morning open door policy we are in close and regular contact with parents. Each class has a home learning programme that also allows parents to gain an insight into the current and ongoing work in school. This openness allows parents to raise questions about aspects of teaching and learning at the school and teaching staff will address such questions through information and if necessary through discussion and the assistance of senior colleagues.

Assessment at Forge

Assessment at Forge is aimed to:

- Be an in-built part of our day to day work

- Enable children to learn more effectively at a level that is both challenging and attainable.

- Enable teachers to focus their teaching more accurately towards the needs of pupils ie: inform future planning.

- Enable the school and teachers to identify areas for development

- Help Identify pupils who may have Special Needs

- Enable children to begin to gain a realistic view of their own progress and develop an ability to take some responsibility for their development

- Provide evidence of progress and needs that can be used to inform parents and relevant professional about the progress of individual children and groups of children in the school.

- To identify underachievers from standardised scores and class performance and target to raise attainment in Literacy and Numeracy.

Methods and range of assessment:

We will engage in both Formative and Summative Assessment

Summative Assessment
Aimed at providing evidence of progress and ability we will use a number of formal and semi- formal methods to provide data.

Assessment Activity/Test	Purpose	Year Group/Time of Year
GL Progress in English	• To provide standardized data comparing individual attainment to age related norms. To identify discrepancies between perceived cognitive ability and attainment in specific aspects of literacy. • To identify trends of attainment in specific aspect of learning eg: reading and inform literacy action planning	Summer term/May P2-P7
GL Progress in Maths	• As above for Numeracy and Maths	Summer term/May P2-P7
Non Reading Intelligence Test	• Perceived Cognitive Ability score used as comparative to standardized scores in subject specific tests to identify discrepancies	Early Spring P3 & P5
End of Key Stage Assessment	• Statutory Assessment in English and Mathematics to provide pupils with a 'Level' consistent with NI Curriculum. Assists school in benchmarking and target setting. Informs parents of progress	P4, P7 Spring Term
Lucid Dyslexia Screening Resource	• To assist in identifying trends linked to specific learning difficulty on the dyslexic spectrum.	On basis of Class teacher, SENCO and Parent consensus
Collins Primary Maths Assessments	• To enable class teacher to monitor progress, plan for the future and to allow school to have comparative data to inform numeracy action planning.	P1-P7 Half Termly
ICT EKS Levels	• To provide KS1 & 2 pupils and parents with a level for competence in ICT skills. • To test and level pupils in P4 and P7 at end of each Key Stage.	P7 P4 Spring - Summer
Northern Ireland Transfer Test	• To provide a grade for grammar school to use as a basis for selection. Completed outside school.	P7 November/Dec

Baseline /Comet	• To provide information about ability at P1 entry and on going skill acquisition at P1.	P1 September
Schonnel Spelling	• To provide a spelling age. Tested at P3 and again in P5.	P3 & 5 Spring Term

While the above tests are by nature summative forms of assessment the school recognizes that while useful in it's own right for information purposes, the true value of the data gained through the majority of these tests is in it's use in a formative way to inform future planning.

Formative Assessment

Assessment Activity/Test	Purpose	Year Group/Time of Year
Observation	- To observe development of skills and ability - To assess suitability of activities and inform forward planning. - To gain insight into behaviour and collaborative learning. - To assess pupil engagement and motivation - To inform the teacher as to the success of otherwise of an activity - To gauge the pupil's understand of the learning intentions - To gauge a pupil's ability to follow instructions, make decisions and manage a task	All year groups
Marking	- To monitor pupils progress and inform future planning. - To provide feedback to pupils.	All year groups
Discussion & Dialogue	- To gauge the understanding children have of an area of study through discussion. - To inform the teacher about children's confidence and ability to articulate their learning.	All year groups
Professional Judgment	To combine all of the listed methods of assessment with the teachers knowledge of a child as an individual and their all round ability to make a balanced and informed assessment of need an or ability	All year groups

Assessment for Learning, in the context of the Revised Curriculum is an area that is under development at Forge. All classes use 'What Are We Learning Today' boards to set clear learning intentions in literacy and numeracy and operate a plenary system at the end of an activity to allow opportunity for pupils to reflect on their learning. Observation and dialogue are also used in most classes on a regular basis to inform planning and this is most developed in Early Years classes and will develop further throughout the school with the roll out of the revised curriculum.

Target Setting and Bench Marking

At Forge we aim to monitor the achievements of our pupils, set realistic targets to try and increase that achievement and develop an action plan to work towards meeting those targets.

The sets targets for achievement in End of Key Stage Assessment. These targets have been set on the basis of teacher's judgement. During the year 2015 we have also carried out an analysis of GL/NFER Progress in English test scores to identify trends and inform action planning. Numeracy action planning is also informed through the use of the GL/NFER Progress in Maths test and the Collins Primary Maths Assessments.

Pupil Attainment - Benchmarking

- Target setting and bench marking data has been made available to us from DENI
- Tables below compare our end of key stage results to the NI average and to free school meal banded schools whose intake in the context of social need is similar to ours.
- Results are generally positive - above the Northern Ireland Average in many instances.
- Further data comparing our performance to schools of similar size/similar numbers of free school meals pupils puts us generally in median group.
- Some below median and below average results are apparent at end of key stage two.
- Targets set are aiming to maintain or increase attainment more consistent with NI average.

Reporting to Parents

Parents receive information about their child's learning through:

- Informal contact through open door policy
- Autumn Term Curriculum Information Evenings
- Home Learning Activities
- The School Website
- Open Day (December)

- Twice yearly parent meetings (October and June)
- End of Key Stage Assessment Results
- INCAS assessment results
- Annual end of year report

Parents are encouraged to make appointments to visit their child's teacher at any point in the year if they have concerns or need assistance. Likewise, the school will get in touch with parents if there is a concern about a child's learning that they feel needs to be brought to the attention of their parents.