**Building a Legacy**

# Andrews Memorial Primary School

# Policy on Learning and Teaching

# Our school ethos

Andrews Memorial believes in the potential of every child: to create; to achieve; to celebrate; to make a difference. We believe in blending and balancing the traditional elements of literacy and numeracy with a stimulating, up-to-date and challenging curriculum. We recognise the potential for ICT to enhance learning across the curriculum.

We aim to ensure that we provide a welcoming, caring and happy learning environment, in and beyond the classroom; also that we deliver learning that is valued by the whole school community and which develops an understanding and an appreciation of the world around us.

Ultimately, we hope to nurture well-rounded young people, who can engage with each other and with adults; who respect everyone and who have a sense of moral responsibility.

We believe it is our duty to:

✓ Enthuse and enable pupils to reach their full potential by developing independence, self-discipline, self-confidence and self-esteem

✓ Create an atmosphere of encouragement and high expectations

✓ Build and nurture partnerships between home, school and the community

✓ Provide a well-balanced, exciting curriculum in a safe, caring and happy environment

✓ Promote an ethos of ambition and achievement

✓ Instil a sense of purpose in making a contribution to life in and beyond school

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## 1.     Rationale

Learning is the core business of our school and the school values the experience for both the pupils and the staff.  It actively promotes learning in which the experience is challenging and relevant, but also enjoyable and fulfilling.

This policy aims to set out the strategies and procedures the school adopts in promoting learning; also to outline the background to how a learner learns; and how the school undertakes the process of monitoring, assessment, evaluation and review.

The policy should be regarded as a core reference for teaching and learning in all curriculum areas.  While these have their own evidence based schemes, this document should provide a background to common approaches adopted throughout the school and a baseline reference to current educational theory and practice that focuses on the **'learning experience'** in the broadest sense.

## 2.     Aims for Learning and Teaching

Andrews Memorial Primary School aims to promote learning which:

**For the pupils:**

- Reflects the ethos and vision of the school
- Recognises that children learn in different ways
- Meets all children's educational and pastoral needs
- Is enjoyable and relevant
- Is motivating and challenging
- Helps develop skills and independence in a variety of subject areas
- Aims to raise standards achieved
- Provides opportunities to celebrate achievement

**For the staff:**

- Reflects the ethos and vision of the school
- Develops a culture of professional development
- Is supported by careful planning
- Is appropriately resourced
- Takes account of examples of good practice and research
- Improves the standard of education provided by the school

**For the parents:**

- Reflects the ethos and vision of the school
- Recognises and supports the roles of parents and carers in children's education
- Is accountable
- Is valued by the whole school community
- Promotes learning among the wider school community

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## 3.    Learning Styles

Children and adults learn in different ways[1]. Three widely recognised styles are:

> ➢ Visual Learners
> ➢ Auditory Learners
> ➢ Kinaesthetic Learners

Teachers recognise these different modes and are aware of their own preferred style. Teaching takes account of these styles and seeks to provide a variety of lessons that access knowledge and skills for the children through experiencing a variety of teaching strategies. Pupils' preferred learning styles are monitored by the staff through use of questionnaires.

Learners are also recognised as an amalgam of 'intelligence 'types'[2], whereby any one person's understanding of a skill or subject is influenced by their **'multiple intelligence profile'**. In addition to this intelligence profile, a learner's **'emotional intelligence'** will play a role. Emotional intelligence focuses on a person's feelings about themselves, their level of motivation and how they relate to those around them[2]. Theories and research on the human brain and how it adapts to learning are ongoing; there is no universally accepted theory. As a school, we recognise the potential impact of this research and seek to keep abreast of developments.

## Accelerated Learning Cycle[3]

Connecting the learning is crucial to its success. In this way, the expected outcomes of lessons are explained to the children, often in a visual form for ease of reference. Discussion and display of We Are Learning To (WALT) and What I'm Looking For (WILF) are used consistently throughout the school. Lessons are focused on these outcomes, and conclude with a plenary session in which the outcomes are referred to and highlighted. The lesson is also placed within its context of subject / topic area or skills focus. Thus, children are referred to the 'big picture' in order for them to understand the relevance of their learning.

Children's views on learning are valued. Questions such as:

> ☑    What did you learn?
> ☑    What helped you learn?
> ☑    What / How might improve your learning?
> ☑    What more would you like to learn?
> ☑    How do / did you feel about your learning?

can be used to help them organise and connect their overall learning experience.

[1] Appendix 1: Learning Styles
[2] Appendix 2: Multiple Intelligences
[3] Appendix 3: The Accelerated Learning Cycle

## 4.    Teaching Strategies

## Planning

Effective planning will impact directly on the learning experience. It should take account of:

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- The context of the lesson(s) – the 'big picture'
- The intended learning outcomes / intentions
- The different learning styles within the class or group
- The range of abilities of the children
- The relationships between lesson content and delivery styles
- Available resources in the classroom (fellow learners, teachers, audio-visual, text, ICT)
- Available resources outside the classroom (school grounds, visits and visitors, external agency support)
- The process of monitoring

## Practice

The practice of learning and teaching will reflect all of the above and will focus on a range of classroom management strategies. Independent organisation refers to pupils working towards minimal teacher interaction, while developing a sense of responsibility for their learning. Naturally, the degree with which this approach is possible is determined by the age and ability of the pupils. Children with Special Educational Needs, including those with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), are seen as full members of our school community and their needs are integrated into classroom practice. Suggested approaches include:

- Whole class – discussion, KWL grid, review, circle time
- Group – teamwork, independent discussion, shared tasks
- Paired – shared tasks, peer support, monitoring and review
- Independent – individual tasks

## Monitoring, Assessment, Evaluation and Review (see also the policies on Assessment and Homework in the Appendices)

Monitoring of learning and teaching takes place on two levels – strategic and individual. It is focused on both the children's and the adults' learning. The Principal, School Leadership, Learning and ICT Teams, and Governors, have responsibility for strategic monitoring from a whole school perspective and the professional development of staff (teaching and non-teaching). Curriculum Teams, Coordinators and individual teachers are more directly responsible for monitoring the needs, experiences and achievements of the pupils on an individual, class, year group or Key Stage level.

A variety of approaches and techniques are employed, including:

- Adoption of assessment policies for formative and summative procedures, including classwork and homework
- Use of data, eg PIE/PIM analysis: SIMS Assessment Manager
- Collation of teachers' planning – short, medium and long term
- Collection of pupil books
- Pupil self-monitoring and feedback
- Recording of classroom and corridor displays (photographs)
- Team teaching and peer review
- Lesson observation (focus on the children's learning)
- Staff meetings (including Key Stage and Year Group collaboration)
- Seeking feedback from parents and the wider school community
- Board of Governors
- Informal discussion with members of the school community

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Additionally, monitoring of learning achievement is linked to statutory assessment tools, eg End of Key Stage Assessment and Benchmarking. Teachers may implement their own assessment procedures to inform their planning and practice.

Currently, the school has a statutory responsibility to organise one parent-teacher consultation in the autumn term. At Andrews Memorial parents have the opportunity to meet with their child's class teacher on two occasions during the school year – October and March. Each pupil receives a written end of year report in June.

All the monitoring procedures outlined above, along with assessment results, provide opportunities to celebrate achievement and raise the self-esteem of both pupils and staff. This opportunity should not be underestimated, nor underused; it will reflect non- academic as well as academic achievement. Assemblies, Pupil of the Week and House point systems play a particularly relevant role in this regard.

The process of monitoring is linked to one of Evaluation and Review. Strategic planning – the School Development Plan - including curriculum development and financial accountability, builds in time and methods to evaluate the evidence collected by the monitoring process. Specific curriculum area action plans also include a review and self-evaluation procedure, and  - crucially – are prepared by teams of teachers representing all Key Stages.

Target setting is central to this process, as is the inclusion of clearly measurable success criteria, set within a specified time framework and accountable to available resources (staff and finance).

'Self-evaluation', in which the school identifies issues or areas it feels it has either made significant progress in, or needs to develop, is ongoing at Andrews Memorial. There is potential for the use and cross-referencing of DENI policy documents, eg Every School a Good School, Together Towards Improvement, Count, Read, Succeed. Essentially, self-evaluation focuses on reflective practice linked to detailed auditing and accountability – key components in assuring the delivery of quality teaching and learning. It is also a process that relies on professional and personal integrity; on all members of the school community being valued and trusted to raise standards within their own school.

It should be apparent that monitoring, evaluation and review is a cyclical process; that, to follow its course in any area of development, it requires a return to the starting point, by which the process of raising standards begins again. A successful school is never satisfied; it never stands still.


## 5.      The School Community – maintaining and building the vision

Central to the ethos of the school, is the school community:

- Pupils (past and present)
- Parents
- Staff (teaching and non-teaching)
- Governors
- Local community

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- Outside agencies (e.g. sports coaches, music tutors, local Council, churches, library)
- Education and Library Board (ELB) / Education & Skills Authority (ESA)
- Controlling bodies (e.g. Department of Education, CCEA)

The school values all the contributions this community makes and aims to communicate openly and regularly with the members, as and when appropriate. Parents are welcomed in school. Two consultations are arranged, in October and March, and a written report is issued in June. Curriculum Evenings enhance our parents' knowledge and understanding of any development issues. Parents are also invited to comment on any school development issues or policy initiatives being undertaken. All parents are members of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and an elected committee of parents and staff serves for two years. The PTA meets regularly to organise fund raising and social events throughout the year.

The school website aims to provide an ongoing record of events, children's work and current policies, Year group News Sheets supplement the monthly News page. Letters are issued to parents on Wednesdays, unless relating to an individual class or year group, when the teacher(s) may choose a different day.

The school welcomes outside agency contributions that provide opportunities to enhance the children's experiences and learning in, for example, sport, music, drama and art. The school has a positive relationship with curriculum advisors in the ELB, and Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA); representatives from these bodies offer support in a variety of areas and the school provides 'on site' access and research data in return.

The school seeks to contribute to the life of the wider community of Comber where possible, through, for example, choir visits, sporting competitions, local Council events and environmental projects.

Essentially, Andrews Memorial has been at the heart of the community since it opened in 1973. It has a proud tradition of serving that community, and remains focused on continuing to deliver quality teaching and learning in the twenty-first century.

Of special relevance to community engagement is the Andrews Memorial Hall, a building built by and for the community some 60 years prior to the school taking over the premises.

The 'Big Hall' is now the heart of the school, used for all our services and shows, and community events. The Titanic Centenary (2011-2012) provided a fabulous opportunity for the school to re-engage with the community of Comber and welcome more community use of the hall. Partnerships formed during the Centenary year are very much at the core of our building sustainability for the hall, and the school, in the 21st century.

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**Appendix 1   Learning Styles**

We all have a preferred learning style, or perhaps a combination of several.  Our preferred styles are based on previous experience, beliefs and values and, because the styles are based on experience, we can modify or develop them in response to new or different learning experiences.

Learning styles are related to how we think and learn, too, although these characteristics are more difficult to determine (see Appendix 2).

Of the five senses, three seem to relate to learning styles – sight, sound and touch.  Translated into style, these can be referred to as **Visual, Auditory**, and **Kinaesthetic**.  Smith (1988) has developed a questionnaire by which an individual's preferred learning style can be identified.  This is reproduced here for reference.  It should be noted that a combination of all three will be evident in the outcome, but that the outcome is an aid to moving towards an understanding of how we might engage with our learning.

Importantly for teachers, Smith recognises the link between an awareness or understanding of learning styles and how we might introduce or explain a topic within a lesson.  Essentially, if we adopt a variety of styles in our delivery, there is more chance of all the learners engaging with the subject matter or skills being taught.   He proposes what is known as the **VAK** approach, set within the **Accelerated Learning Cycle** (see Appendix 3).

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## Learning Preference Questionnaire

We all depend on different ways of encoding the world via our senses, and different ways of storing and recalling this information. Most people have a preference and sometimes this preference is very strong.

Some of us prefer our information to be scanned visually (Visual learners), some via our ears (Auditory Learners) and some by doing and moving (Kinaesthetic Learners).

We should be aware of learning preferences for two reasons: first our learning preferences affect our teaching style if assumptions are not surfaced; and second we need to vary learners' 'learning activity diets', between using their preferred learning styles and occasionally developing their non-preferred style(s) to achieve a more balanced profile.

- Answer the questions on the next page as honestly as you can.
- Tick one column for each question.
- When you have finished, please return to this page and complete the table below.

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Visual        Auditory        Kinaesthetic

## NB Please don't leave with a label!

(the table below should not be shown to the pupils)

| | question number | | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Visual | 1 | 6 | 8 | 13 | 14 | 20 | 21 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 30Auditory | 2 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 12 | 15 | 17 | 19 | 22 | 26 |
| Kinaesthetic | 3 | 4 | 10 | 11 | 16 | 18 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 27 |

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| For each statement below, please tick the box that corresponds to your own learning preference | Yes! ► 3 | 2 | 1 | ◄No! 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) If I have to spell a tricky word, I write it down to see if it looks right | | | | |
| 2) I prefer to listen to explanations than reading about the subject | | | | |
| 3) I don't like reading or listening to instructions, I prefer to get on with it | | | | |
| 4) I need to take regular breaks when I'm working | | | | |
| 5) When I'm doing a test, I can often hear explanations I've heard | | | | |
| 6) I remember things best when I write them down | | | | |
| 7) When spelling a tricky word, I say it repeatedly to see if it sounds right | | | | |
| 8) I take a lot of notes of what I read or hear | | | | |
| 9) I say things like, ' I hear what you say' or 'that rings a bell' | | | | |
| 10) If I have to write a tricky word, I might write it in the air to get the feel | | | | |
| 11) I wave my hands around a lot when I'm explaining something | | | | |
| 12) At work I often tilt my head to the side and/or rest my head in my hand | | | | |
| 13) I look at people when they are explaining – it helps me concentrate | | | | |
| 14) I find it easy to understand maps, graphs and diagrams | | | | |
| 15) I often talk to myself, say things aloud, when working | | | | |
| 16) I say things like, 'that feels right' or I've got the hang of it now' | | | | |
| 17) I often repeat instructions to myself under my breath | | | | |
| 18) I like to learn in real life situations | | | | |
| 19) I find/would find it helpful to speak notes to a recorder and play back | | | | |
| 20) When I'm doing a test I can picture my notes or the textbook I used | | | | |
| 21) I am able to visualise pictures in my mind | | | | |
| 22) I would prefer people to tell me directions rather than show me a map | | | | |
| 23) I find it hard to sit still, I'm a bit of a fidgeter | | | | |
| 24) I like to explore things – taking them apart and tinkering with them | | | | |
| 25) I like to walk around when I am reading/talking | | | | |
| 26) It's easy to follow a speaker's ideas, even when I'm not looking at them | | | | |
| 27) If assembling a piece of furniture, I would just try to work it out by trial and error, rather than follow the instructions | | | | |
| 28) I talk quickly – I tend to talk more than listen | | | | |
| 29) I prefer to see a map than be given spoken directions | | | | |
| 30) I say things like 'I see what you mean' or 'I get the picture' | | | | |

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**Appendix 2   Multiple Intelligences**

Multiple intelligence theory was first proposed by Gardner (1993), in which he identified eight different intelligence types (see Table 1 below).  More recently, Goleman (1996) added emotional intelligence profile (Table 2).

A summary of these intelligences, along with links to learning activities is reproduced in Tables 1 and 2 below.  This research is neither universally accepted nor complete. If we recall the fact that 80% of what we know about the brain has been discovered in just the last twenty years, there must be huge potential for further investigation and research into how this most complex of organs works.  In this sense, it is especially relevant for the teaching profession to maintain contact with research data and keep up to date with current theories and findings.
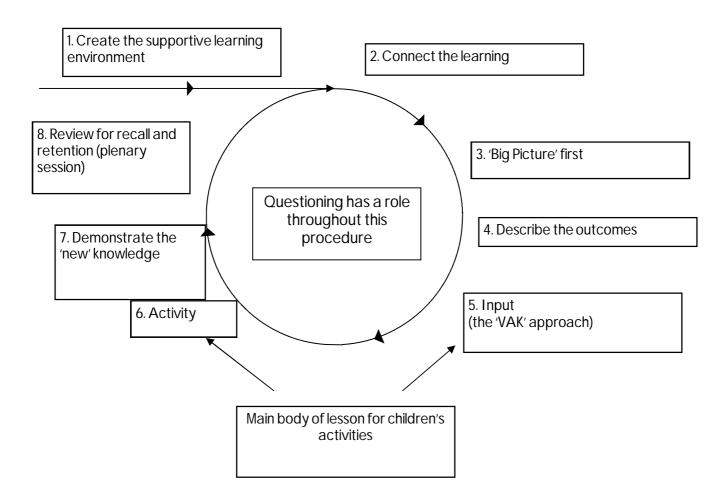
**Table 1:**                **Multiple Intelligences**

| Type of Intelligence | Definition | Learning Activities |
|---|---|---|
| Linguistic | Ability to use language well; skilled in verbal and written communication | Audiotapes, books, crosswords, debates, essays, fact/fiction, newspapers, magazines, research, reports, storytelling |
| Logical–Mathematical | Ability to develop thinking in a logical way, solve problems and understand mathematical and scientific processes | Codes, computations, formulae, sequences, statistics, timelines |
| Musical | Ability to use pitch, rhythm and tone; attunes easily to melody, song and rhythmic patterns | Beat, choral, composition, harmonies, instruments, musical groups, raps, songs, performance |
| Spatial | Ability to see the visual world accurately and to recreate visual experiences; good use of mind's eye to visualise pictures and to examine visual stimuli | Cartoons, doodles, drawings, diagrams, maps, mobiles, mosaics, paintings, sculptures, storyboards, symbols, visual aids |
| Bodily–Kinaesthetic | Ability to control the body and movements; likes using or making craft, mechanical or performance objects; adept at physical co–ordination, hands–on activities and learning by doing | Body language, dancing, dramatising, PE and games, gesture, facial expressions, outdoor activities, practical work, role–playing, skits |
| Interpersonal | Ability to get along with and motivate others; sensitive and attuned to others' feelings, moods, desires and motivations; generally empathetic of others' needs | Collage production, conversations, consensus, dialogue, group tasks, mutual development, team challenges, team sports |
| Intrapersonal | Ability to know self well and to manage own life and learning; use introspection and self–knowledge to guide actions | Affirmations, creative expression, insights, poetry, personal diaries/logs, meditation, self–assessment |
| Naturalist | Ability to understand nature and get most out of the environment; generally in harmony with the natural environment; comfortable in different natural contexts and across the seasons | Categorising natural phenomena, ecology studies, field studies, forecasting weather, observing and /or photographing aspects of nature |

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**Table 2:        Emotional Intelligence**

| Component | Definition | Characteristics |
|---|---|---|
| **Self-Awareness** | The ability to understand one's moods, emotions and drives, as well as their effect on others | ☺ Self confidence<br>☺ Realistic self-assessment<br>☺ Deprecating sense of humour |
| **Self-Regulation** | The ability to control or redirect one's disruptive impulses and moods; the tendency to suspend judgement – to think before acting | ☺ Trustworthiness and integrity<br>☺ Comfort with ambiguity<br>☺ Openness to change |
| **Motivation** | A passion for work which goes beyond money and status; pursuit of goals with energy and persistence | ☺ Strong achievement drive<br>☺ Optimism, even in the face of failure<br>☺ Organisational commitment |
| **Empathy** | The ability to understand the emotional make-up of other people; the skill to treat people with regard to their emotional reactions | ☺ Expertise in building and retaining good people<br>☺ Cross-cultural sensitivity<br>☺ Commitment to service to stakeholders, particularly clients |
| **Social Skills** | Proficiency in managing relationships and building networks; an ability to find common ground and build rapport | ☺ Effective change leader<br>☺ Persuasive<br>☺ Good at building and leading teams |

**Source for Tables 1 & 2: Professional Qualification for Headship (N. Ireland), Development Programme**

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**Appendix 3    The Accelerated Learning Cycle**
**(adapted from Smith 1998 & PQH (NI) resources)**

1. Create the supportive learning environment

2. Connect the learning

8. Review for recall and retention (plenary session)

3. 'Big Picture' first

Questioning has a role throughout this procedure

4. Describe the outcomes

7. Demonstrate the 'new' knowledge

5. Input (the 'VAK' approach)

6. Activity

Main body of lesson for children's activities

1.    **Create the supportive learning environment –** optimal learning conditions are in place before the lesson begins.  Learners are made to feel that they belong; they are encouraged to have clear aspirations; they feel safe and secure; they have a strong sense of identity and of success.

2.    **Connect the learning –** there is a clear and explicit indication of where the learners have come from and where they are going.

3.    **Big picture first –** the overall shape, content and activities of the lesson are described and placed in context.

4.    **Describe the outcomes –** the intended outcomes of the learning are made clear.

5.    **Input –** the activities are described using VAK and other sensory modes of input.

6.    **Activity –** pupils are engaged in the main activities.

7.    **Demonstrate –** learners demonstrate what they have learned.

8.    **Review for recall and retention –** the outcomes are reviewed using a variety of techniques.  This helps pupils recall and retain learning.

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## Appendix 4    References

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Together Towards Improvement – A Process for Self Evaluation, eti, 2003

**Appendix 5   Policy on Assessment**

**Introduction**

Assessment lies at the heart of the process of promoting children's learning through the Northern Ireland Curriculum.  It is the collecting, analysing and interpreting of information to assist teachers in making decisions, setting targets and levelling children at the end of KS1 and KS2.

Assessment at Andrews Memorial will be positive, manageable and a useful tool to assist teachers in developing the ability of each child to fulfil his or potential, as well as provide information to help the pupil to improve.

Pupils will be involved in peer assessment and self-assessment so that they will have a confident understanding of the term Assessment for Learning.

The principles of assessment are:

- To raise standards of learning
- To provide information for teachers to support planning for progression in learning
- To share learning  goals with the children
- To involve children in peer assessment and self-assessment
- To help pupils understand and recognise the standards they are aiming for
- To provide information for target setting - for individuals, groups, classes, year groups, whole school
- To identify children for learning support
- To inform parents of progress across all areas of the curriculum at regular intervals, including statutory requirements on year group and Key Stage levelling

**All forms of assessment will inform pupils, teachers and parents.**

**Assessment for Learning**

Assessment opportunities should be a natural part of teaching and learning and take place daily in the classroom through discussion, listening and analysis of work. It is important that teachers know how well a child is progressing and that the pupils themselves understand how well they are doing and what they can do and learn to help them improve.

To achieve this in Andrews Memorial, we will:

- Evaluate pupils' learning during each lesson to identify those pupils with particular needs so that any issues can be addressed in subsequent lessons
- Adjust plans to meet the needs of the pupils, ie implement strategies for differentiation and assessment
- Ensure pupils understand the learning objectives and success criteria, encouraging them to evaluate their progress while completing the task

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- Set SMART targets for children identified after data tracking is completed and discuss these with the children so that they are encouraged to strive for improvement
- Develop and adopt effective questioning and observation strategies to support quality learning and feedback
- Inform parents of any child requiring an IEP to include them in supporting their child's learning
- Encourage pupils to evaluate their own work against agreed success criteria
- Mark work using constructive and informative comments
- Develop and adopt in-school assessment tasks, as well as use CCEA tasks
- Develop a whole-school approach to internal moderation
- Complete PIE, PIM and NRIT Standardised Tests alongside any statutory assessments

## Formative Assessment

Formative assessment procedures and strategies are outlined in the relevant section of the Learning & Teaching Policy – they lie at the heart of the Accelerated Learning Cycle.

## Diagnostic Assessment

In simple terms, diagnostic assessment identifies strengths and areas for development, as well as informs pupils, teachers or parents about the next steps in learning required to make progress. Naturally it includes a 'summative element', in terms of finding out 'where pupils are', but its principal focus is to inform planning for progress.

## Summative Assessment

Summative assessment takes the form of any type of assessment used to gain information on the performance of pupils at any given time – in terms of knowledge and understanding in curriculum 'subject' areas, or in terms of Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. It can be part of a weekly assessment, an 'end of topic' assessment, or an end of year assessment. It forms an integral component of a school's data tracking procedures and the monitoring and evaluating of pupils' progress.

The completion of any statutory assessment programme forms part of the school's summative assessment programme. It is a systematic part of our school's work which will be used to track pupils' progress through the year groups using Assessment Manager on SIMS. This ensures that the needs of every pupil can be identified and that the school can develop a clear understanding of where standards need to be addressed. Regular reviewing and tracking of data gives teachers the opportunity to revise and refine targets for pupils. This ensures that; where necessary, pupils will have consistently realistic yet challenging targets.

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**In summary**

Ultimately, all forms of assessment complement and support one another. They provide essential and relevant information at all levels of school management and allow for effective monitoring and evaluating. In this way, they contribute towards what might be called 'evaluative assessment' (CCEA 2013).

Evaluation in formal terms relies on schools using assessment data derived from end of Key Stage assessments and Levels of Progression (P4 and P7), which feeds into the DENI's data on benchmarking (the comparison of the school's performance compared to similar schools in terms of their Free School Meals index). However, in practical terms, we rely more on the quantitative data produced by PIE and PIM assessments. Andrews Memorial has developed a comprehensive and inclusive strategy of data tracking that relies on input from all classes from P3 –7. There is also a strategy for internal moderation of the levels of progression in the same year groups.

In future years, the schools aims to monitor the availability of assessment programmes within the Foundation Stage, although at present we are satisfied that through clearly developed observation and recording strategies, the pupils at this stage are appropriately assessed across the curriculum.


**The Roles of the Learning Team and Assessment Coordinator**

The Assessment Coordinator liaises with and through the Learning Team; to the SLT and the teaching team (the key contact is the Vice Principal). A summary of the primary roles is listed below. It should be noted, however, that in the current educational environment assessment is rather fluid and prone to change. The role is therefore dynamic in nature and the person(s) responsible need to remain adaptable to change. At Andrews Memorial, we have developed the role – and that of the Learning Team – over a number of years and feel that it reflects our 'building form within' ethos of policy development.

- To coordinate the assessment timetable (see below)
- To disseminate publications and correspondence from external agencies (eg SEELB, CCEA & DENI)
- To attend information / update workshops on assessment
- To deliver INSET to the staff; in particular to coordinate the whole-school sharing of assessment data and practice

The timetable for assessment outlined below is also adaptable to change. Where there is a page reference in RED, it refers to particular a pro-forma in the teacher's assessment folder (also available in the Assessment folder in RM Staff).

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# Timetable for assessment 2014/15

| | |
|---|---|
| May / June | Carry out PIE & PIM tests (NRIT / CAT if applicable) |
| | Mark and print out PIE & PIM data for inclusion in assessment file (RM Staff, 'Assessment' folder) |
| | Input PIE & PIM scores to SIMS. Create and print off stanine tables with target group highlighted. It is <u>essential</u> that scores are inputted before the end of term, even if tables are not printed! |
| | P3 – 7: PAGE 1 – Complete 'Data analysis/ identification of target pupils'. Select/ suggest target pupils for the **next** year group. This should be filed and passed to the class' next teacher (or passed to the Learning Team in the case of a P7 group) |
| Late August | P4 – 7: PAGE 3 – Complete 'Analysis of Target Pupil Outcome' sheets for **your** year group |
| August / early September | Complete sheet – PAGE 2 – 'Data analysis / Target pupil setting. |
| | Combining **your** analysis of pupils' scores with that of the previous year's teacher, identify children who will be targeted THIS year in your class. |
| | Set year group target for % of children achieving stanine band 5. |
| Late August | Collate number of children in each stanine band for comparison table and collect full list of children making low progress. (This will be the responsibility of the Learning Team. Information will be used for monitoring and evaluation purposes by Principal & Learning Team). |
| Monthly – September to April | Monitor the progress of those pupils specifically identified as 'target children' or having made low or high progress. |

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**The Role of the SENCO – see also the school's Policy on Special Educational Needs**

Primaries P3 to P6 complete PIE and PIM in May each year. Primaries 4 and 6 also complete the NRIT test. These are examined by the SENCO and class teachers. Children who score under 85 will receive extra help for the following year and will be given an IEP (Stage 2 of the Code of Practice). Children between 85 and 90 will also be given an IEP to keep a track of their learning (Stage1).

Should a teacher have a concern about a pupil, they can be referred to the school psychologist through the SENCO (Stage 3). Parental consent is required for the psychologist to assess the child. Ultimately, provision may be put in place for additional teaching support or Classroom Assistant support, the latter in cases where a Statement of Special Educational Needs is issued (Stage 5).

There is an option for children from classes P1 to P4 to be referred to the Additional Support for Children in Education Team (ASCET) team if the class teacher feels that there is a need for a child to be assessed in relation to speech and language or motor skills which impair his/her learning potential.

## Reporting

Reporting to parents provides the opportunity for communication about a child's achievements, abilities and future targets. Written reports for Years 1–7 will be sent home to parents in June. Children in Primaries 4–7 have their PIE and PIM scores recorded alongside the class average score. Pupils in Primaries 4 and 7 also have their end of Key Stage levels recorded on their reports, accompanied, where necessary, by comparative information about the school's performance and that of children in N. Ireland as a whole.

Reports will be written so that they have a positive effect on pupils' attitudes, motivation and self-esteem; however honesty, integrity and informal professional judgement will also be maintained.

## Moderation

Moderation is important to ensure a consistent approach to assessment throughout the school. It takes place internally, within a class, year group or school, and externally, as part of a CCEA-directed procedure. It is important that when teacher assessment is carried out, that there is evidence available to justify or monitor judgements made as a result.

At Andrews Memorial we will:

- Moderate learning regularly in class through observation, discussion and marking
- Ensure that each teacher completes a file annually, containing important information to help with targeting and planning; each file will contain:

  1. Copies of PIE and PIM scores and relevant charts and graphs
  2. SIMS printouts regarding Stanine Banding

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3. NRIT scores from P4 and P6
4. At the end of each year, teacher-assessed levels or progression will be made available to the Learning Team and the Principal from P3 –P7; these levels will be agreed following internal moderation and discussion by the full teaching staff

## Marking

Marking work is the responsibility of the class teacher and, at times, the children themselves.  On occasions there will be peer marking, self- marking and group marking.
Marking should be meaningful and constructive to the pupil and should focus on positives as well as development points.  Oral feedback is also an opportunity for highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

## Reference

CCEA (2013) Guidance on Assessment in the Primary School. Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment, Belfast.

NB – the booklet referenced above contains other useful references on assessment.

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**Appendix 6    Policy on Homework**

**Introduction**

The school policy for homework was developed and agreed by the whole staff at Andrews Memorial.  We define 'homework' as any set work or activity completed outside of lesson time, either alone or with parental involvement / cooperation.

The purpose of this policy is to:

➢ ensure consistency of approach throughout the school
➢ ensure clarity for parents in terms of what is expected  with respect to homework
➢ ensure progression towards independence and individual responsibility
➢ ensure that homework is set for clearly defined purposes and not for its own sake

The aims of homework are to:

➢ consolidate / reinforce skills and understanding, particularly (though not exclusively) in Literacy and numeracy
➢ provide opportunities for parents and children to share in learning experiences
➢ advance confidence, independence and the self-discipline needed for personal study in preparation for KS3 and beyond

**The nature of Homework**

Homework can be set in many different forms with many different expectations and outcomes.  It is important to remember the following points:

➢ The nature and type of homework changes throughout a pupil's school career
➢ The amount and frequency of homework should increase as a pupil gets older(see guidelines below)
➢ Homework should not cause undue stress on the pupil, parent or teacher
➢ Homework will not necessarily always come as a written task
➢ Homework should not be set for new work which has not already been introduced in class
➢ Completed homework should be followed up in class, with pupils given feedback in written and/or verbal form
➢ Pupils are expected to see that homework is an extension of class study; as such, it should not be seen as an optional task:

    ✓ failure to complete homework will be treated in the same way as failure to complete class work
    ✓ homework should also be presented to a standard which is expected in class with a parental signature where appropriate

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**Homework Guidelines**

The amount and type of homework will change as the child progresses through the school. For guidance purposes, this progression is summarised below.

| Year Group | Approximate time allocation | Possible activities |
|---|---|---|
| Primary 1 | 10/15 minutes | Share books with parents from reading scheme |
| Primary 2 | 10-15 minutes<br><br><br><br><br><br>10-15 minutes (Feb onwards) | Reading – finding words which commence / finish with a particular sound, rhyming words, high frequency words; Spelling – 2 activities on worksheet |
| Primary 3 | Mon –Thurs 30 minutes per night<br><br>1 night per week 10-15 minutes | Spellings and tables learnt orally; oral shared reading Numeracy / literacy / WAU activity |
| Primary 4 | Mon – Thurs<br>5-10 minutes<br>5-10 minutes<br>10 minutes<br>Mon & Tues 20 minutes maximum | Spellings<br>Tables<br>Reading<br>Written homework |
| Primary 5 | 15 minutes<br>10 minutes<br>10 minutes<br>20 minutes Mon., Tues., Wed.<br><br>Weekly target (45 minutes over week) | Reading<br>Spellings<br>Tables<br>Written homework (numeracy, Literacy, WAU) |
| Primary 6 | 1 hour maximum<br><br><br><br><br>Weekly target (45 minutes over week) | Written homework Mon – Thurs (usually 2 numeracy & 2 Literacy);<br>Spellings, tables, reading nightly |
| Primary 7 | 15 minutes<br>15 minutes<br>15 minutes (bare minimum)<br><br>30 minutes (Mon-Fri)<br><br>Weekly target (45 minutes over week) | Spellings<br>Tables (term 1)<br>Reading – emphasis placed upon reading for pleasure;<br>Written homework (numeracy, literacy, WAU) |

**Inclusion**

Homework is set for all children as a normal part of school life. At Andrews Memorial we will ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to the ability of the child and will endeavour to adapt any task set so that all children contribute in a positive way.

Role of Teachers:

➢ Ensure that homework is appropriately set and fully explained so that pupils have a clear understanding of the task given. In addition, teachers need to make sure that pupils are fully aware of what is expected from them in terms

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of neatness, presentation, effort etc;

➢ To give guidance to parents as to expectations for homework and how they may assist their child appropriately. This should be covered at year group parents' meetings at the start of the school year;
➢ To ensure that homework is purposeful and links directly to the curriculum;
➢ To mark homework and, when necessary, supply verbal feedback to individual pupils or the whole class;
➢ To praise/reward children who regularly complete homework tasks.

Role of Parents:

➢ To emphasize to their child that they value homework and that they support the school in its view that homework is an important part of learning;
➢ To support the school and their child by ensuring that he/she attempts the homework;
➢ To provide a suitable environment for their child to carry out their homework;
➢ To give encouragement and praise to their child and, where appropriate, involve themselves and support the child in homework activities;
➢ To provide relevant comments with regard to their child's homework – in writing if necessary; written homework should be signed on each occasion.

Role of pupils:

➢ To develop their self–management skills in recording and bringing home their homework task(s);
➢ To develop an independent attitude towards homework as and when appropriate;
➢ To complete the homework task(s) on time;
➢ To seek advice and support from a supervising adult at home;
➢ To follow up queries with their class teacher.

General:

• If parents have any questions about homework, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's class teacher.
• If children are absent for a short period due to illness, homework should not be sent home, as we assume that the child is too ill to work.
• If a longer period of absence is necessitated, the parent should contact the class teacher to discuss arrangements which may be put into place.
• As homework should be relevant to class work which is current, homework tasks cannot be given in advance of holidays taken during term time.

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**Notes**

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