Smithycroft Secondary School
Effective Learning and Teaching

Policy

Effective Learning & Teaching Policy Contents

Link to Effective Learning & Teaching Appendices

School Aims for Effective Learning & Teaching

Smithycroft Secondary School has always been more than just a school. It is a community of people learning and living together.

Our Mission Statement for Effective Learning & Teaching in Smithycroft is:

- We recognise that we all have a duty to care for and be considerate toward each other.
- We believe that education includes getting to know people and working with them, as well as learning.
- We believe that all our pupils have the right to be given the opportunity to achieve success no matter what his or her interests and abilities are.
- We recognise the importance of encouraging young people to be self-confident, self-motivated, independent learners and thinkers.
- We look upon our young people as valued individuals.
- We believe in preparing pupils for adult life and aim to achieve this by making sure that they have the knowledge, skills and self-confidence to allow them to make informed choices.

Effective Learning & Teaching Policy

This Policy Document aims to encourage teachers to:

- Re-examine current practice
- Reflect on the purposes and principles which underpin current practice
- Identify areas of strength & development
- Develop appropriate strategies to further promote effective Learning & Teaching

Teachers who refer to this document will find the Appendices a useful tool toward the achievement of the above through:

- Accessing a range of practical guidelines outlining effective teaching and learning strategies
- Sharing the good practice which exists at Learning Community, whole school and departmental level

This Policy Document further aims to encourage our pupils to:

- Be active participants in the learning process
- Take a personal pride in their own learning
- Support and encourage each other.
- Contribute to a positive ethos where all forms of achievement are celebrated

The structure of the policy is such that at any time further appendices may be added by departments or by individual members of the school community.

Meeting Individual Needs

> "Teachers are important and make a difference.
> The quality of the teaching is a crucial factor in promoting
> effective learning in school."
> *From Effective Teaching & Learning, 3:1*

In meeting the needs of individual learners we acknowledge that:

- No two learners are alike.
- Young people will display different abilities in different contexts.
- Young people will experience more success in some areas than in others.
- Some young people will have learning difficulties or disabilities of varying degrees which, without additional support, could be barriers to their learning.
- Some young people will display more than average ability in some contexts.

In meeting these individual needs we must:

- Identify pupil strengths and areas for development
- Differentiate so that all pupils in our care can learn at an appropriate pace and level.
- Acknowledge that our young people bring their past experiences of learning, their current image of themselves as learners, and their hopes for the future to the learning process.

Supporting Learning & Teaching

Classroom teachers and Heads of Department can call upon a wide variety of support to enhance effective learning and teaching. These include:

- Support for Learning Department
- Pastoral Care Team
- Members of the Senior Management Team
- Members of the Joint Assessment Team
- Education Liaison Officer

The practices which can support learning and teaching include:

- Consistency across the curriculum.
- The sharing of good practice
- Effective communication between Departments, Support Teams and Management.

Resources

The principal educational resource in any school is the teacher. It is the teacher who determines what other resources are required to achieve the aims and objectives of a lesson.

Our aim, at Smithycroft, is to make available as many resources as possible so that individual teachers and departments can employ a full range of teaching and learning approaches.

Information Communication Technology has become a major resource in our school. ICT resources are not useful as a means of learning and teaching, but the skills required to use ICT are valuable in themselves and ones which our pupils are likely to need when they finish school.

The Role of Parents/Guardians

The parents/guardians of our pupils are their first educators. Parents/guardians should feel that our school actively encourages them to continue to play a part in their child's learning. Parents/guardians will have varying degrees of involvement, but, through the use of existing communication forums, such as letters, newsletters and information evenings we would encourage the following:

- Attendance at school meetings when appropriate, e.g. Parent/Teacher Evenings
- Ensuring that their child's attendance and punctuality is satisfactory.
- Checking their child's study planner to ensure that homework is completed.
- Helping with homework, where appropriate.
- Encouraging their child to check that they are carrying the correct books and equipment
- Supporting the school in matters concerning the individual child.

Smithycroft welcomes contact from parents/guardians regarding any aspect of their child's education.

Monitoring & Evaluation

This school policy statement on Learning and Teaching will be reviewed as part of the school development plan every three years. The review will actively seek the views and recommendations of all interested parties.

At a departmental level the Head of Department should ensure that the policy is being effectively implemented. The Head of Department will also be invited to submit their department's view and suggestions when the review of the policy takes place.

Smithycroft Secondary School
POLICY STATEMENT FOR MORE ABLE LEARNERS

AIMS

At Smithycroft Secondary school we aim to:

- Be committed to entitlement and quality provision for all more able learners
- Recognise exceptionally able, more able and enthusiastic learners in all curriculum areas through a range of identification and assessment procedures
- Employ strategies for provision which include entry on the more able register, participation in the mentoring project, differentiation, extension and enrichment within extra-curricular and curricular activities
- Provide challenge beyond the curriculum
- Encourage independent learning and self motivation
- Raise pupil self-esteem
- Raise the level of achievement of all pupils
- Acknowledge and promote parental involvement in the learning of more able and exceptionally able children

DEFINITIONS

More Able Learners include pupils who:

- Are recognised as having significantly greater potential or to be performing at significantly higher levels in comparison to their peers
- Excel in specific academic fields
- Exhibit high performance capability in intellect
- Excel physically in areas such as swimming, athletics, gymnastics, etc
- Excel creatively in areas such as music, dance, drama, or other performing arts
- Excel artistically in areas such as the visual and expressive arts
- Excel as strategic/logical thinkers in problem solving/independent learning tasks
- Demonstrate very significant leadership capabilities

IDENTIFICATION

A register of more and exceptionally able children identified as having skills, capabilities, qualities or talents in the recognised areas is maintained by the more able learner co-ordinator. Identification is made through:

- Primary/secondary liaison information
- Information received through observation by parents, classroom teachers, Heads of Department, Support for Learning staff and from external agency liaison, such as educational psychologists
- Curriculum for Excellence assessment results
- Class and subject test results
- Pupil self-referral

MONITORING

Once identified, pupils are tracked through observations; regular teacher assessments, Guidance interviews/target setting, and participation/attendance in the more able learner mentoring project.

PROVISION

At Smithycroft Secondary we aim to provide:

- An environment where achievement is encouraged in all areas of school life and where the more and exceptionally able feel secure enough to display ability and take risks
- A climate where expectations are high
- A whole school staff who expect excellence
- Challenge beyond the confines of the curriculum
- Situations which allow more able and exceptionally able learners to engage in critical thinking and independent learning

CLASSROOM ORGANISATION AND LEARNING PROGRAMMES

Strategies employed within class to meet the needs of the more and exceptionally able are:

- Differentiation of work – by group, task or outcome. This also encompasses pace of work, use of resources, level of support, level of dialogue, introduction and continuation of the task and opportunity for independent learning
- Extension – providing increased depth and breadth appropriate to individual needs and levels of attainment. Pupils are encouraged to participate in setting up their own learning programmes where appropriate
- Individual work programmes – for exceptionally able pupils
- Grouping/Setting in class for subjects across the curriculum
- Withdrawal – when appropriate to work with specialist help or have support for extension activities
- Work at home – in liaison with parents activities are set which employ challenge independent research and enquiry.
- More Able Learner Internet Project. More able pupils are invited to take part in the Dudley Internet Project during their first year. The project involves pupils working independently and as a team, tackling problem solving activities which reflect all areas of the curriculum. The project takes place over a 10 week period and is facilitated by pupils being extracted from a practical subject for the duration.

OUT OF SCHOOL PROVISION

Opportunities include:

- A wide variety of after school and lunchtime clubs in which the more able learners can excel
- Activities such as school plays and concerts, assemblies, day and residential trips and sporting events where those with creative, artistic, leadership and organisational abilities excel

USEFUL CONTACTS AND INFORMATION SOURCES RELATED TO MORE ABLE AND EXCEPTIONALLY ABLE PUPILS:

Smithycroft Secondary School is a member of (SNAP) - Scottish Network for Able Pupils (Glasgow University)

For teachers:

- National Association for Able Children in Education (www.nace.co.uk)
- The Brunel Able Children's Education Centre (www.brunel.ac.uk)
- Becta (www.becta.org.uk)
- World council for Gifted and Talented Children (www.worldgifted.org)
- Pete Stollery - Music Education Research (http://www.abdn.ac.uk/~crs035/petestollery.com/text/snapreport.html)
- Irish Centre for Talented Youth (http://www.dcu.ie/)
- The Scholar Programme (Heriot Watt University) http://scholar.hw.ac.uk/
- Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.ac.uk/)
- NRICH Online Maths Club (ww.nrich.maths.org.uk)
- Learning and Teaching Scotland (www.ltscotland.org.uk)
- National Grid for Learning (www.ngfl.gov.uk)
- National Curriculum, Guidance on Teaching the Gifted and Talented (http://www.nc.uk.net/gt/index.html)

For parents

- National Association for Gifted Children (www.nagcbritain.org.uk)
- National Association for Able Children in Education (http://www.nace.co.uk/
- CHI – The support Society for Children of High Intelligence (http://www.chi-charity.org.uk/)

For Young People

- Spark Island (www.sparkisland.com)
- National Association for Gifted Children (www.nagcbritain.org.uk)
- Exscitec (http://www.exscitec.com/)
- Young Engineers (www.youngeng.org)
- NASA Educator Astronaut Program (edspace.nasa.gov)
- The Dudley Internet Challenges (http://www.edu.dudley.gov.uk/c2000)