

Brynhafren C P School

Curriculum Policy

Brynhafren Primary School

CURRICULUM POLICY STATEMENT

The fundamental aim of education is: *to produce learners who are motivated and effective, increasingly responsible for their own learning, able to make full use of the new technologies and who will be able to learn and apply new skills effectively throughout their lives, whether in school, the workplace or at home (WAG, 'Making the most of learning'.)*

The curriculum in Brynhafren Primary School is in a period of transition as the seven core aims of the Welsh Assembly Government (*The Learning Country: Vision into Action*) become the focus for schools. The new school curriculum "*promotes and supports personal development and is responsive to the needs of individual pupils*".

The seven core aims for children and young people are the basis for the development objectives and targets in the Powys Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2012 (CYPP).

Brynhafren Primary School's revised development plan from January 2011 links closely to the CYPP and focuses upon core aims together with specific aspects relating to raising standards in the school.

Brynhafren Primary School's Curriculum aims to:

- Focus on the learner
- Ensure that skills development is woven throughout the curriculum
- Focuses upon continuity and progression and effective transition
- Focuses upon skill development
- Is flexible and relevant
- Supports national policies: bilingualism, curriculum cymreig, equal opportunities, food and fitness, sustainable development and global citizenship, the world of work and entrepreneurship.

The curriculum focuses upon all learners and ensures access to relevant skills, knowledge and understanding at an appropriate level. Where pupils work significantly below expected levels, then their curriculum uses the needs of the child as the starting point and adapts the learning programme accordingly. More able pupils are offered greater challenge through extended depth of study and opportunities for independent learning. The development and application of transferable generic skills (thinking, communication, ICT and number skills) may also further expand breadth and depth of learning.

At Brynhafren Primary School we choose material that:

- Provides a meaningful, relevant and motivating curriculum

- Meets the specific needs of learners and furthers their all-round development

Leaders and teachers at Brynhafren Primary School:

- Promote inclusion and engagement in education and learning
- Ensure that individual learner's needs are met effectively
- That learners' strengths and areas for development are identified through effective assessment techniques
- Use assessment information to inform the planning of the curriculum
- Where appropriate, involve pupils in planning their own learning and targets for improvement

Within a skills continuum curriculum there will be skills that can be demonstrated by younger learners at the end of the continuum and vice versa, however, it should be remembered that progression in skills is achieved by an increase in the challenge of the contexts through which skills are developed and the complexity of the activities involved.

Under the revised curriculum arrangements from September 2008, there are no constraints relating to time allocation or organisation of subjects. Thus as we develop the revised curriculum we will:

- Retain aspects of the existing approach to curriculum organisation
- Adopt a new approach to delivery
- Develop imaginative and innovative ways of delivering the statutory curriculum
- Adopt a more flexible timetable, combining subjects in a thematic way and blocking periods of time for intensive and focused study

Underpinning the curriculum is the developing skills continuum linked closely to effective skills assessment. A specific skill may be the current focus of teaching and learning. Repetition of the use of this learned skill will enhance understanding and confidence. Opportunities to use generic skills will be planned and taken at all opportunities.

Any thematic approach used will specify the skills taught and developed and meet the statutory content of the curriculum. Using a thematic approach is effective in providing learners with the opportunities to consolidate and apply their skills in a new context. This enhances learners' self-confidence and self-esteem.

Planning effective transition between phases is particularly important and Brynhafren Primary School works closely with secondary teachers on the teaching and learning that has gone before; a skills focused curriculum lends itself to effective transition.

A whole-school approach for cross-curricular approaches to learning is vital. Brynhafren Primary School will be revising its curriculum leadership responsibilities to provide a whole-school co-ordinator for 'CrossCurricular approaches'.

Aspects to be reviewed and developed are:

- Contexts to best deliver specific skills
- Developing Habits of Mind towards lifelong learning
- Developing independent learning opportunities
- Providing engaging contexts for learning
- Developing AFL strategies and therefore personal targets and challenge
- Ensuring differentiation and challenge
- Focusing and developing the skills continuum
- Identifying opportunities for developing generic skills
- Common approached to pedagogy
- Encourage active and interactive learning
- Common expectations
- Ensuring continuity and progression
- Appropriate and informative assessment is undertaken
- Sharing of information and involving all staff in the learning process
- Incorporating a Welsh dimension in learning opportunities
- Incorporating Wales, Europe and the World in learning Opportunities
- Incorporating cross-cutting themes of: sustainability, global citizenship, food and fitness and equal opportunities.

A change in pedagogy: *"It is imperative that teaching pedagogy is reviewed and updated in order that learners have experience of, engage in and consolidate the skills demanded of today's citizens."* (DELLS, 'Why develop thinking skills and assessment for learning in the classroom?').

At Brynhafren Primary School we will promote:

- A focus on teachers facilitating learning through development and use of skills for learning
- A focus on developing proactive learner rather than merely transferring facts
- Collaborating learning where learners learn from each other in pairs and small groups across schools or a wider group

- Active and interactive learning
- Developing thinking, especially questioning, planning, problem-solving, creative and critical thinking skills
- Determining success criteria so that learners are aware of what they can do, what they need to do to improve and how to do it
- Reflection on what has been learned and how the learning has occurred.

We aim to enable learners to:

- Take responsibility for their own learning
- Think for themselves
- Improve the quality of their speaking and listening
- Develop bilingual skills and the ability to work in two or more languages
- Gain a deeper understanding of topics
- Be more critical about evidence
- Make reasoned judgements and decisions
- Understand and hasten their own progress
- Achieve better quality outcomes
- Develop increased self-confidence
- Engage in self-assessment and peer assessment
- Develop Christian values
- Be better prepared for the challenges of school and the wider world.

The provision in Brynhafren Primary School for a continuous skills curriculum across the Foundation Phase and National Curriculum Key Stage 2 enables ongoing, formative assessment (assessment for learning) to be undertaken. Through this learners will establish their current position and then be able to move forwards to targets that are achievable and recognised by the learner.

Questioning techniques, providing feedback to learners and self/peer-assessment are fundamental principles that underpin our formative assessment. Leaders will assist teachers in directing focus upon developing specific skills across classes or with individual pupils. Formative skill-based assessment will impact upon planning and providing opportunities for skill progression and learning.

Sharing pupils' achievements is undertaken at scheduled times through a common approach to assessment and learning based firmly within the skills continuum. It also provides secondary teachers with information that enables them to build upon pupils' skills and what they have been involved in before.

The NC Level Descriptions describe the types and range of performance that learners should characteristically have. A pupil is allocated a summative level that best fits – it is, of course, likely that a pupil will exhibit characteristics of the adjacent levels. Although the National Curriculum does not include sub-divisions of Level Outcomes, we have identified these as a tool in showing value-added progression over time. Assessment judgements by teachers are based on a wide range of work undertaken by pupils in a wide range of contexts – it is this understanding of the pupil that informs ‘teacher assessment’. A record of samples of pupils’ work is maintained to support teacher-assessment judgements particularly over time and enable the work of the pupil to be viewed also in terms of a continuum of learning and achievement.

The NC Level Description Skills have been adapted into learning ‘Rubrics’ which the children use to identify their current entry level and which skills to focus on to improve their learning and outcomes. They will consider the ‘Rubric’ at the start of a topic then evaluate their progress and development at the end.

Brynhafren Primary School Curriculum

The curriculum in Brynhafren Primary School is in a period of transition: from Desirable Outcomes to Foundation Phase Outcomes; from separate National Curriculum (NC) subjects to learning that focuses upon a continuum of developing skills and key skills; from learning based upon separate subject skills to a pedagogy that develops skills for independent and lifelong learning, that looks to engage pupils and the understanding that learning is a continuum from birth till old age.

From the youngest age, children are encouraged to think about their learning, to plan their play and to communicate their findings and feelings. The current Desirable Outcomes have been organised to ensure that all areas of learning are incorporated within a balanced curriculum. The Foundation Phase (FP) curriculum and outcomes becomes the statutory provision for under-sevens in September 2010, but we are undertaking considerable training and have focused our curriculum planning upon the skills continuum developed to achieve FP Outcomes. This continuum presents for each outcome three ‘steps to learning’ and both provides opportunities for continuous skill progression and meeting the individual needs of learners. The FP Skills continuum for Outcomes 4-6 incorporates NC Levels 1-3; consequently, we moved teaching and learning in Y1 and Y2 onto this FP curriculum having regard for the NC skills ladders.

Linked to this FP skill continuum is the assessment of pupils’ skills achievements from a baseline on entry in the nursery (3 years) to the end of their Y6; the skills assessment continues systematically into Revised Curriculum Skills levels.

The FP skills assessment records pupil’s skill achievements in: Personal and Social development; Language, literacy and communication; and in mathematical development. In addition the achievement of pupils in Revised Curriculum skills in foundation subjects is also recorded and reported. Teacher Assessments (SATs) will continue to be undertaken to maintain continuity and progression.

The assessments undertaken provide formative analysis opportunities for teachers and leaders to evaluate individual pupil's progress and the performance of groups of pupils across a wide range of skills. This is a vital element in our determination to continually raise standards. Teaching, resources and learning opportunities will be adapted following evaluation of outcomes to focus upon raising targets to measurable targets set.

Revisions to the NC for Key Stage 2 pupils came into effect from September 2008. These revisions have been incorporated into a revised NC skills continuum across all subject areas. It is this continuum, following on seamlessly from the FP skills continuum, which forms the basis for our organisation of learning for KS2 pupils. Again, learning looks to ensure constant progression along this skills continuum and at a pace that is both challenging and that meets the needs of individual learners. Key skills are identified and linked to Habits of Mind; every opportunity is given to incorporate these in all aspects of learning.

Teaching and learning strategies are looking to incorporate the 'Thinking Skills' philosophy whereby opportunities for all learners to engage and communicate are developed.

Assessment to split NC levels has been purchased from 'Jeff Loxton' and provides a continuum from FP Outcomes to L5 and if necessary, beyond to L8. Summative outcomes are recorded and reported to show value-added and progression over time, they are also used as formative evaluation of both individual pupil achievement and group/class/year group outcomes. Analysis by teachers and leader then directs adaptations to learning and provides a focus upon skills that are under-developed. Where appropriate, individual pupil targets are also identified in collaboration with pupils. We are looking to adapt our written reports to parents to incorporate an increasing focus upon skill development and specific targets set.

A review of current curriculum planning and organisation notes that The Desirable Outcomes for Learning, the National Curriculum and *Religious Education* are met fully in a broad and balanced curriculum. These current statutory curriculum requirements are delivered through schemes of work. Mathematics and Literacy are aligned closely to the national Numeracy and Literacy Strategies and are supported by Hamilton-Trust. The 'Desirable Outcomes for Learning' curriculum has been organised through a school based scheme of work.

Schemes of work provide the current long-term planning structure. Medium-term planning, the head teacher is advised, is completed at the commencement of each term. Short-term planning is personal to each individual teacher and in a format which they find best for immediate and efficient delivery of their specific lessons.

The evaluation of learning outcomes has already moved into a skill continuum focus and teachers and leader have undertaken analysis and evaluations of skill outcomes. These are now determining the refocusing of planning for learning together with identification over opportunities to develop generic skills.

The audit and evaluation of core subjects has identified the need to focus more attention upon recording and analysis of outcomes, opportunities incorporating both are being focussed on through using and applying mathematical concepts and skills and developing scientific enquiry. Language development in Welsh and bilingualism are focusing upon greater opportunities for pupils to engage and communicate. With the 'Thinking Skills' philosophy will offer our learners greater opportunities to actively engage in their own learning and seek to raise their own independent learning skills.