Learning, Teaching, and Assessment at Halfmerke Primary

**1. Introduction**

This policy sets out the principles and practices for learning, teaching, and assessment at Halfmerke Primary School. It reflects our commitment to creating a nurturing, inclusive, and stimulating environment where all children can achieve their fullest potential. Our approach to learning and teaching is designed to meet the needs of all learners, allowing them to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship.

**Our Vision and Values**

Working and learning together to achieve excellence for all.

At Halfmerke Primary, in partnership with the wider community, we aim to provide high quality, stimulating learning opportunities, which allow children to develop an excitement for life-long learning. We aim to enthuse our children with a love of learning – whether learning indoors or outdoors in our fantastic grounds.

We provide a highly positive, inclusive and welcoming ethos which encourages participation of all and which values and embraces diversity. We promote strong positive relationships and foster an ethos where pupils are encouraged to respect themselves and others. We pay close attention to the care and welfare needs of all our children, their families and our staff. Our staff are happy and supportive, and they work hard to ensure that all children have access to every area of the curriculum and maximise learning opportunities.

Respect - Honesty - Trying our best - Friendships - Inclusion

Our school is built on the values above. Everyone in our school community should feel respected and included, we work closely with West Mains School to ensure that we are an inclusive campus. Staff work to provide a motivating, engaging and caring environment and set high expectations for all learners. As a staff, we believe in motivating pupils to be the best they can be and encourage creativity, honesty, empathy, fairness and independent learners. Every pupil in Halfmerke Primary is important. Pupils are at the heart of everything we do, they are challenged and supported to be the best they can be. A ‘can do’ attitude is encouraged.

**2. Learning and Teaching Principles**

At Halfmerke Primary, we believe that learning is a collaborative, dynamic, and child-centered process. We are committed to:

* **Promoting Active Learning**: Children should be active participants in their learning. They will engage in a variety of learning experiences, including discussions, practical activities, problem-solving, and reflective tasks that build on their prior knowledge and experiences.
* **Creating a Positive Learning Environment**: We aim to establish a safe, supportive, and stimulating environment where all children feel respected, valued, and motivated to learn. Positive relationships between teachers, pupils, and parents are central to fostering such an environment.
* **Inclusive Practices**: We are committed to ensuring that every child, regardless of their background or ability, has access to a broad and balanced curriculum. We adapt teaching methods to cater to individual learning needs and ensure that all children are supported in their learning.
* **Encouraging Independent Learning**: Children should develop the skills to become independent learners who are able to plan, reflect, and evaluate their own progress. This helps foster resilience, responsibility, and a love for lifelong learning.

**3. Curriculum Design and Delivery**

The curriculum at Halfmerke Primary is designed to provide a broad, balanced, and challenging education that is relevant to each child’s age and stage of development. We follow the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) framework, ensuring that our curriculum is underpinned by:

* **Experiences and Outcomes**: Our teaching is based on the Experiences and Outcomes for each curriculum area outlined in the CfE, ensuring that children develop a range of skills and knowledge across different subject areas.
* **The Four Capacities**: Our aim is to develop children as:
	+ Successful learners
	+ Confident individuals
	+ Responsible citizens
	+ Effective contributors
* **Interdisciplinary Learning**: We use interdisciplinary learning (IDL) to allow children to make connections across different areas of the curriculum, fostering a more holistic understanding of the world around them.

We use Education Scotland Benchmarks as a ‘tool’ for effective planning and assessment of our curriculum. Pupils value opportunities to have a say in what and how they learn.

Staff at Halfmerke work collaboratively to ensure that our curriculum reflects the refreshed narrative <https://home.scotlandscurriculum.scot/>

And the seven design principles by:

* Providing all learners with breadth, depth and progression at all stages.
* Ensuring there is continuity and progression between stages and at key transitions.
* Ensuring relevance and coherence to wider life.
* Providing opportunities for pupils to exercise personalisation and choice.
* Taking account of cross cutting themes and interdisciplinary learning to ensure challenge and enjoyment.

At Halfmerke Primary we use the SLC Progression Frameworks to ensure a coherent and progressive approach to learning and teaching.

Lessons are delivered through a variety of methods to engage all children. These include:

* Direct teaching
* Group work and collaborative learning
* Hands-on learning experiences
* Outdoor and experiential learning opportunities
* Technology-enhanced learning

**4. Assessment**

Assessment at Halfmerke Primary is a continuous and integral part of the learning process. It allows teachers to track pupils' progress, identify next steps in learning, and inform planning. We use both formative and summative assessments to gather evidence of learning.

**Formative Assessment:**

* **Purpose**: To monitor children’s progress and provide feedback that informs next steps in learning.
* **Methods**: Observations, questioning, peer and self-assessment, discussions, learning conversations, and informal assessments.
* **Feedback**: We provide constructive feedback to support children’s learning and development. Feedback is timely, clear, and focuses on specific areas for improvement, promoting a growth mindset.

**Summative Assessment:**

* **Purpose**: To measure children’s learning at specific points in time and assess attainment against curriculum expectations.
* **Methods**: Standardised assessments, end-of-topic tests, and external assessments such as Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA).
* **Reporting**: Summative assessment results are shared with parents and carers through termly progress reports and parent-teacher meetings.

**Tracking and Monitoring:**

* Teachers maintain records of pupils’ progress and use this data to track progress against learning targets.
* Pupil progress is regularly reviewed by staff to ensure children are meeting expected milestones, and any gaps in learning are addressed promptly.

**5. Differentiation and Inclusion**

At Halfmerke Primary, we are committed to ensuring that all children can access the curriculum regardless of their individual needs. Differentiation is used in all teaching to support learners with varying levels of ability and need. We employ various strategies, including:

* Adjusting the pace of lessons to meet individual needs.
* Providing resources, materials, and support to assist with learning.
* Offering additional support through classroom assistants or targeted interventions.
* Offering enrichment opportunities to stretch more able learners.

We also work closely with external agencies, such as speech and language therapists or educational psychologists, to ensure that children with additional support needs receive the support they require.

**Nurturing Principles**

At Halfmerke we have adopted a nurturing approach within our school and classrooms. This approach offers a range of opportunities for children to engage with missing early nurturing experiences, giving them the social and emotional skills to do well at school, with peers, and to develop their resilience. The nurturing approach allows staff to develop and embed a nurturing culture throughout the school promoting healthy outcomes for children, all by focussing on emotional needs and development.

The Six Principles of Nurture

1. Children’s learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
4. Language is a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children’s lives

**6. Parental and Community Involvement**

We believe that education is a shared responsibility between the school, pupils, and their families. We encourage active involvement from parents and carers in their children’s learning through:

* Regular communication via newsletters, emails, and the school website.
* Parent-teacher consultations where learning progress is discussed.
* Informal meetings to discuss specific concerns or successes.
* Family engagement activities, such as workshops or school events, which promote learning at home.

The school also fosters connections with the local community and wider society through community-based projects, guest speakers, and partnerships with local businesses and organisations.

**7. Professional Development and Staff Collaboration**

The ongoing professional development of our teaching staff is essential to maintaining high standards in teaching and learning. Teachers engage in regular professional learning opportunities to:

* Keep up to date with the latest pedagogical practices.
* Reflect on their teaching practices through peer observation and feedback.
* Collaborate with colleagues to share best practices, resources, and ideas.

We ensure that all staff have opportunities to engage in professional development that directly benefits their pupils’ learning experiences.

**8. Monitoring and Evaluation**

To ensure the effectiveness of our teaching and learning practices, we regularly monitor and evaluate:

* Teaching and learning strategies.
* Assessment and feedback practices.
* The impact of interventions for individual children.
* Overall pupil attainment and achievement.

The Moderation Cycle/Learning, Teaching and Assessment Cycle is a tool used at Halfmerke to place assessment and moderation within the process of teaching and learning, providing a holistic approach. By ensuring that the Moderation Cycle is used, a firm foundation is in place to improve quality professional dialogue on teaching and learning.



The evaluation process involves all stakeholders, including staff, pupils, parents, and the wider community, and is used to inform school improvement plans.

**9. Review and Update**

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in meeting the needs of all learners. Feedback from staff, parents, pupils, and other stakeholders will be gathered as part of this review process.

This policy reflects our commitment to providing a high-quality education that meets the needs of every child at Halfmerke Primary, supporting them to become successful, confident, and responsible individuals.

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