

Gleniffer High School



Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

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Introduction

Gleniffer High School is committed to providing a high-quality education in a caring and welcoming environment. It is our belief that the well-being of all young people promotes self-worth, confidence and self-esteem, leading to high quality attainment and achievement.

In Gleniffer High, we will engage with all our stakeholders to promote well-being and ensure that our learners have the opportunity to thrive in a stable school environment. This will support their progress and prepare them for life beyond school and make our community a great place to live.

Rationale

This policy aims to highlight and disseminate good practice in teaching, learning and assessment. This good practice has been identified through looking at effective teaching within Gleniffer High School and current policies in education. We want every teacher in Gleniffer High School to be confident that, *“all learners experience activities which are varied, differentiated, active, and provide effective support and challenge”* (HGIOS?4 2.3).

Excellent teaching and learning is Gleniffer High School’s key priority. This priority is underpinned by our school vision and values, where we are committed to ensuring that all staff have the highest expectations and aspirations for every pupil. We continually strive to ensure that pupils’ learning experiences are in a caring and nurturing environment, where success is celebrated within and out with the classroom.

We are committed to a curriculum that provides an opportunity for achievement and attainment, a commitment which enhances improvement in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. We strive to close the gap between the most and least disadvantaged young people and provide opportunities to ensure our children are equipped with skills for learning, life and work, and gain a positive and sustainable school leaver destination.

Pupil Voice

UNCRC Article 12: “Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express these views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child” (unicef.org.uk)

In creating our Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy, it was imperative that Gleniffer High School pupils’ voices were sought, heard and reflected throughout this document. As Gayle Gorman, Chief Executive Officer, Education Scotland says:

“2018 was designated as Scotland’s Year of Young People. We are celebrating and promoting opportunities that give our young people a stronger voice on matters that affect their lives. We want to challenge perceptions of what young people are capable of and empower them to use their ideas, skills and talents to achieve great things for themselves and with their peers and their communities. This is the heart of what highly-effective learner participation is all about.”

Acceptance - Ambition - Nurture - Respect - Trust

In Gleniffer High School, we believe that it is vital to have our learners at the forefront of what we do. This information was collated through numerous pupil focus groups, informal conversations and through our Pupil Council. During these focus groups, pupils were asked what teaching styles and environments were optimal for effective learning and positive relationships to thrive. We believe that these underpin our pupils' ability to attain and achieve. Below are our pupils' findings:

What makes a good lesson?

- Almost all the pupils stated that they enjoyed the lessons that were very active, with a variety of different activities and contexts.
- All pupils stated that they liked having visual aids in the classroom to help their understanding.
- All pupils said they like to work in groups or use their partner for support in understanding class topics.
- All pupils stated that they preferred to have choice in their learning as they were more motivated to learn.
- All pupils stated that they like an organised, calm working environment, where the teacher is fair and consistent in their dealings with pupils.

What do you enjoy/not enjoy during lessons and why?

- All pupils stated that they enjoyed being active in class and working in groups. They stated that the use of technology and games such as 'Quizziz' helped them learn.
- All pupils stated that they prefer teachers who are not too authoritarian.
- Pupils stated they enjoyed watching short documentary clips to consolidate their learning.
- All pupils stated that they enjoyed learning from staff who are passionate about their subject, who are calm and welcome them to their classroom.

Describe a good learning environment?

- All pupils stated that they liked a learning environment where the wall displays were colourful and vibrant, with relevant up-to-date information that is age appropriate.
- All pupils have mentioned that a tidy, well organised, calm working environment helps them to focus and learn better.
- All pupils have said they like being seated in groups, however, they need to be able to see the board from their seat easily.
- All pupils stated that they liked consistency and a calm environment. They all stated that they like it when staff relate things to real life.

Features of Highly Effective Teaching

Features of highly effective teaching practice are clearly set out in *How Good is our School?* Version 4. Gleniffer High School teaching staff should use the principles of HGIOS?4, 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment, in order to inform their teaching practice to ensure every pupil, in every lesson is receiving the highest quality education possible and that learning is motivating and meaningful. The features of highly effective practice are outlined below for teaching staff to consider:

- The learning environment is built on positive, nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships which lead to high quality learning outcomes.
- Learner achievements in and out of school are recognised and recorded. They understand how these achievements help them develop knowledge and skills for life, learning and work.
- Learners play an active role in the school and wider community and regularly take on leadership roles including leading learning.
- Learners receive high quality feedback and have an accurate understanding of their progress in learning and what they need to do to improve.
- Learners are able to give effective feedback to peers on their learning and suggest ways in which they can improve.
- Staff access and apply relevant findings from educational research and professional reading to improve learning and teaching.
- Planning is proportionate and manageable and clearly identifies what has to be learned and assessed.
- Assessment approaches are matched to the learning needs of learners and are used to support them to demonstrate where they are in their learning.
- A quality body of evidence is used to support assessment judgements and decisions about next steps.
- Processes for assessment and reporting are manageable and are very effective in informing improvements and teaching and learning.
- Tracking and monitoring are well understood and used effectively to secure improved outcomes for all learners, including the most deprived children, young people and those who are care experienced.
- All teachers have well developed skills of data analysis which are focused on improvement.

HGIOS?4, Education Scotland

Supporting Learning and Teaching

In order for high quality teaching and learning to take place for every learner, there are many supports in place throughout Gleniffer High School, that teaching staff can access or engage with to support the learners within their classroom. In Gleniffer High School, we believe that variety, clarity, contextualised and effective approaches are needed for all successful teaching and learning. We believe that the construction of a programme of successful teaching and learning takes many different forms.

Some of these supports include the following:

- Additional Support Needs Assistants
- Classroom Assistants
- Educational Psychologist
- Home Link Workers
- Inclusion Support Workers
- Librarian
- Principal Teacher of Curriculum/Faculty Heads of Departments
- Principal Teacher of Data Literacy
- Principal Teacher of Employability
- Principal Teacher of Learning and Behaviour
- Principal Teachers of Pastoral Support
- Pupil Support Teachers
- School Counsellors
- SDS Workers
- Senior Leadership Team
- Transition Teachers

However, at Gleniffer High school we believe that the first educators to our pupils are parents and carers. Therefore, it is vital that we have a positive working relationship with families in order to support our pupils. Gleniffer High School have a House system where families are working with a team of professionals, throughout their child/children's school career. This is to support their learning, development and ultimately achieve a positive and sustained post school destination. All staff have the highest aspirations for our young people.

School Environment and Positive Relationships

In order to support pupils, our learning environment and ethos should be nurturing and challenging and a climate where expectations are high. All staff and pupils are aware of the well-being indicators (SHANARRI) and there are termly checks to ensure that pupils feel safe, secure and have a sense of belonging within the school community.

From our pupil focus groups and surveys pupils have identified that they need their learning environments to be well organised, inviting, calm, well-resourced and with visual aids to help their understanding.

All staff encourage our learners to have a growth mind-set, where they are encouraged to be resilient and challenge themselves to do better. This can be developed through a consistent culture of high expectations and quality feedback. Pupils should be given feedback which praises effort rather than intelligence. Feedback based on intelligence does not tell pupils what they need to do next time, making a negative response more likely when faced with achievement setbacks. Alternatively, feedback based on effort, where learning is valued over performance, builds resilience making a positive response more likely when faced with achievement setbacks. Staff should encourage pupils to understand that mistakes are a natural part of learning. Through our mistakes we learn to adapt, develop and achieve. However, growth mind-set should not be confused with purely encouraging effort. To achieve a growth mind-set pupils must believe they can learn and improve.

“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.”

Thomas Edison



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Lesson Features

Across Gleniffer High School we aim to have a consistent approach to our lesson structure to ensure high quality teaching and learning is present.

Effective teaching and learning includes:

- Review/Recap
- Lesson Starters
- Shared Learning Intentions
- Shared differentiated Success Criteria
- High quality feedback
- Peer and Self-assessment
- Differentiation/Extension tasks to meet the needs of all learners (including our more able)
- Scaffolding
- Effective questioning
- Focussed Learning Conversations
- Pupil led learning
- Active learning
- Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)
- The use of ICT to support Teaching and Learning
- Plenary

Experience and research have shown us that learning is most effective when pupils are able to work at their own level and in their preferred learning style. When learners are actively involved in their own learning, they progress systematically through the key phases of the learning process. The four key phases of effective learning, which should be reflected in a well-structured lesson are:

- **OVERVIEW** phase: where the learning intentions are placed in context;
- **INPUT** phase: where active teaching takes place;
- **PROCESS** phase: where active learning takes place;
- **REVIEW** phase to cement the learning.

These are not rigid, distinct boundaries and lessons will vary according to subject and context, but the key elements should always be present. Consistency, familiarity and organisation help *all* learners, and particularly those with learning difficulties. Teachers can use the four-phase lesson structure to help us to identify which parts of our lessons can be improved.

The Structure of an Effective Lesson

(Adapted from *Tweak to Transform - improving teaching: a practical handbook for school leaders* by Mike Hughes)

Phase One

- Work from previous lesson is reviewed.
- Lesson is placed in a wider context- students are provided with an overview.
- Specific Learning Intentions are shared with learners.
- Targets – collective and individual – are set by the teacher and generated by learners.
- There is a sense of challenge for all pupils.

Phase Two

- Information is presented in short chunks.
- Exposition is kept brief and does not exceed learners' concentration span.
- Teacher frequently ask a mixture of open and closed questions to check for understanding.
- New information is delivered in a variety of ways, to suit students with visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning preferences.
- Teacher checks that all learners understand technical language and subject-specific terms.

Phase Three

- Frequent teacher-learner and peer interactions.
- Time allowed for learners to think about and discuss their responses to questions.
- Questions that encourage learners to reflect on their thinking.
- Opportunities for learners to generate questions.
- Learners fully engaged in their lessons.
- Tasks develop understanding and opportunities are given for pupils to demonstrate their understanding.
- Tasks enable teacher to assess understanding.
- An emphasis is put on encouraging pupils to work independently.

Phase Four

- Sufficient time devoted to reviewing what has been learned.
- Learners actively engaged in the review process.
- Explicit reference to Learning Intentions.
- Learners encouraged to reflect on how they have learned.

Career Long Professional Learning

Gleniffer High School encourages its staff to engage in further Professional Learning by taking advantage of the professional reading materials in the Staff Development Base and access CLPL opportunities through Renfrewshire Council's CPD Manager. We also have a number of resources for teaching staff to access on the school server to enhance their teaching practice.

Gleniffer High School also provides a robust and comprehensive CLPL programme throughout the academic session at a departmental level, at staff meetings and on in-service days. Staff can attend and/or share their own area of expertise at any of these meetings or through our twilight CLPL sessions. Our highly skilled practitioners take a lead role in the delivery of CLPL sessions and welcome opportunities to learn from colleagues in a supportive and informed environment. Any staff wishing to lead or partake in any CLPL sessions should speak to our CLPL co-ordinator, Mrs M Futamata.

Our Career Long Professional Learning programme provides support for staff in implementing effective teaching and learning, helps to ensure staff have learning opportunities to enhance practice and knowledge for the benefit of our learners and whole school community. The CLPL programme can be accessed via the staff server. There is also a Sharing Good Practice folder on the server - (X drive, General Folder, Sharing Good Practice folder)

The folder contains:

- A PowerPoint presentation which takes you through the folder.
- A resource folder (resources can be added from different subjects which can be shared).
- A teaching techniques folder which includes a range of AiFL and collaborative learning strategies.
- A blank template folder (for adding new techniques).
- Video-link folder (this includes video clips of staff demonstrating some of the techniques).

If there is a technique that you use that is not in the folder, the blank template is available for you to add any technique you wish in the same format. Please return the completed template to Mrs Futamata for dissemination to all staff base folders.

All staff are encouraged to meaningfully engage in the Professional Review and Development process where each teacher records their learning throughout a five-year period. They should also assess the impact of their learning on their teaching practice and pupils. The PRD meetings are held on an annual basis with teachers' line managers to ensure that they fully meet the requirements of the General Teaching Council of Scotland. It is every teacher's duty to ensure that they maintain the Professional Standards which are set by the GTCS and to participate in the scheme of the Professional Update (SNCT PT 2 2.2).



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Monitoring and Evaluation

We have a robust monitoring and evaluation programme in Gleniffer High School. This includes:

- Teaching staff have focussed learning conversations during the tracking period to inform pupils of their progress.
- Teaching staff engage in a regular programme of planned classroom observations, where feedback is shared with stakeholders.
- Teaching staff have an opportunity to engage with professionals across the authority to moderate and share resources.
- Staff all take part in our Peer Partner Observation cycle in order to share best practice across faculties. Each year staff work with a new peer partner to ensure variation and exposure to different teaching styles.
- All departments have their own Faculty/Departmental Improvement Plan that is updated throughout the session in January and June.
- Moderation happens at a departmental level and whole school level.
- Analysis of Prelim and SQA data is used to identify areas of improvement for Faculty Heads to focus on throughout the next session.
- Every department engages with HGIOS?4 questionnaires and makes a department return for collation and discussion at SLT and ELT meetings. This allows SLT and ELT to plan and develop their Faculty/Departmental Improvement Plans.
- Department Reviews happen on an annual basis. Each session there are three departments that are focussed on. Within this review there are classroom observations, lesson feedback sessions, professional dialogue, stakeholder focus groups, surveys and questionnaires. All the information is collated and returned to the department in order for the information to feed into their Faculty/Departmental Improvement Plan.
- SLT engage in pupil and staff focus groups to ensure that our school community has a voice.
- Gleniffer High School has implemented a Performance Management Policy for staff to follow to ensure staff, pupils and parent/carers are aware of progress.
- The Principal Teacher of Data Literacy reviews tracking and monitoring data and shares this with Faculty Heads and Principal Teachers to implement appropriate supports for pupils. The PT Data Literacy also identifies pupils who are at risk of underachieving and works with them through a peer/staff mentoring programme.
- Evaluations of in-service day training and CLPL activities are used to inform planning for next sessions.
- Our Quality Assurance calendar is for all staff to use. This calendar identifies when Faculty Improvement Plans, HGIOS?4 Questionnaire returns, Department Reviews, Pupil Tracking and Monitoring etc are due to be completed and returned to the DHT Quality Assurance, if appropriate.

This policy was created by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy group. It was shared with all stakeholders and will be reviewed and updated on a bi-annual basis.

Assessment

As defined by Education Scotland

What is meant by assessment?

Assessment is carried out to see what children and young people know, understand and are able to do. Assessment is very important for tracking progress, planning next steps, reporting and involving parents, children and young people in learning.

Assessment covers:

- The ways teachers support and assess children's learning and monitor progress and identify next steps in learning.
- Reporting to parents/carers, in writing and in discussions, to help them understand their child's progress and what they can do to help their child's learning.
- Formal recognition of a child or young person's achievements through profiles and qualifications.
- Recognising our children's achievements through a range of new qualifications in the senior school, which build on everything they have accomplished throughout their schooling.

Curriculum for Excellence has improved assessment in the following ways:

- A better-connected assessment system with smoother links through early learning, primary, secondary school and college.
- More ways of assessing progress to support learning and more flexibility to meet learners' individual needs.
- By introducing individual profiles of children's achievements at P7 and S3. These give a clear recognition of the achievements they have made and the skills they have developed at these crucial times in their lives.

What is being assessed?

Assessment is a way of supporting learning. It helps teachers, learners, parents and others to understand the depth and breadth of learning undertaken so that progress and next steps can be discussed and planned. There are eight curriculum areas (containing a range of subjects):

- Expressive arts
- Health and wellbeing
- Languages (including English, Gaelic, classical languages and modern languages)
- Mathematics
- Religious and moral education
- Sciences
- Social studies
- Technologies

Each curriculum area is broken down into a set of experiences and outcomes (often referred to as Es and Os):

- The Experience describes the learning.
- The Outcome represents what the learning will achieve. This is often explained, from the pupil's perspective as an 'I can....', 'I am able to....'

Teachers will assess what children know, understand and are able to do within the experiences and outcomes. Teachers will assess each learner's progress and achievements in:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Skills
- Attributes and capabilities

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There are also three key areas which are covered by all teachers/practitioners:

- Literacy across learning
- Numeracy across learning
- Health and wellbeing across learning

How are children assessed?

The child's progress is not only based on 'tests' but on the learning that takes place within the classroom and in different settings out with the classroom.

Evidence of children and young people's progress and achievements will come from day to day learning and through the things they may write, say, make or do. For example, evidence may emerge as a result of children and young people taking part in a presentation, discussion, performance or practical investigation. Evidence could also be a drawing, report, or piece of art work that they have produced. Evidence may be captured as a photograph, video or audio clip as part of a particular learning experience.

Gathering evidence

Evidence of progress and achievement can be gathered by:

- Children and young people through self-assessment. They will be encouraged and supported to look at and revisit their own work, to develop a better understanding of what they have learned, and what they need to work on
- Fellow pupils (peers) through peer assessment. Children and young people will be encouraged and supported to work together with others to assess what is good about their work and what needs to be worked on
- Teachers, parents and others who can help identify and support their next steps in learning.

When does assessment happen?

Assessment takes place as part of ongoing learning and teaching, periodically and at key transitions. As part of ongoing learning-

Children and young people's progress, strengths and needs are assessed as part of day-to-day learning and teaching. Teachers and others do this by, for example, watching and listening to learners carrying out tasks, by looking at what they write or make and by considering how they answer questions. Children and young people will be involved in planning their next steps in learning.

Time to time (periodically):

From time to time, teachers will assess children and young people's progress and achievements in order to be able to plan ahead and to record and report on progress. This will help to ensure that their progress is on track and that any necessary action is taken to support their learning.

At key points, transitions:

Transitions are the moves children and young people make, from home to early learning and childcare settings, from stage to stage (and through Curriculum for Excellence levels), from primary to secondary, to further or higher education and employment. Sharing of assessment information with parents is important to ensure all learners are supported and have a positive experience. Information about a learner's progress and achievements will be passed on to make sure that their broad general education and senior phase continue uninterrupted at the correct level and at an appropriate pace for them.

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