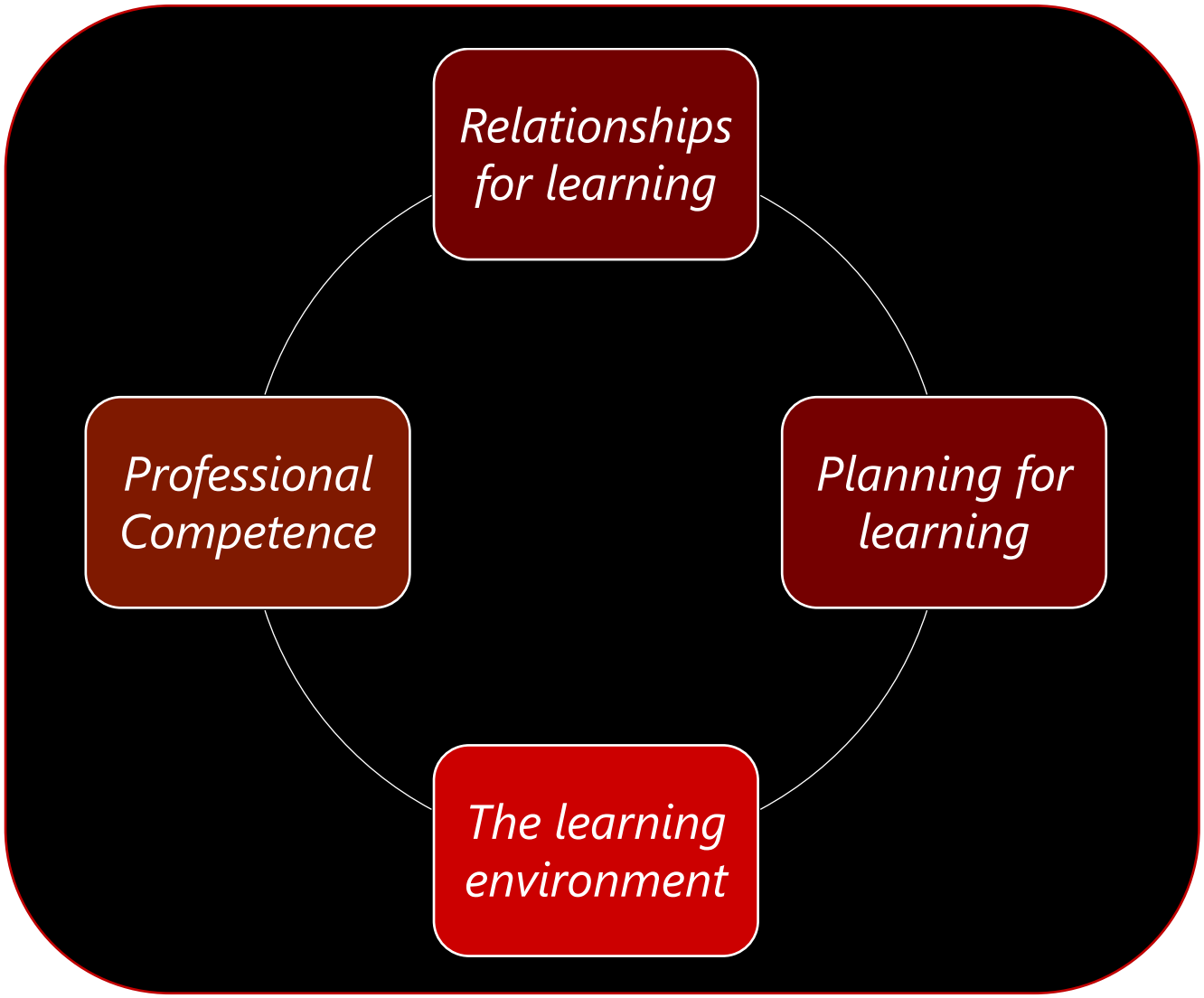
Teaching and Learning Policy

'Fivemiletown Framework for Teaching and Learning'



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Context:

Fivemiletown College is an all-ability comprehensive school situated on the Tyrone-Fermanagh border and within the Clogher Valley. We have approximate pupil numbers of 400 and a teaching quota of 23 individuals. This document adheres to the guidelines set out in 'Every School a Good School' (2009), which recognises that high quality teaching and learning is central to raising educational standards. Coupled with this is the new publication 'Learning Leaders', which aims to empower teachers to strengthen their professionalism and expertise to meet the challenging educational needs of our youth today. Its vision… "Every teacher is a learning leader, accomplished in working collaboratively with all partners in the interests of children and young people." p4. These statements dovetail with the FMT philosophy of child-centred education, with the teacher the essential ingredient in the recipe for success.

This document also becomes a physical manifestation by staff towards the core **values** of the school…***Commitment, Excellence and Respect***. We not only 'talk the talk; but also confidently 'walk the walk.' In addition it marries with our **vision** – ***"A centre of excellence at the heart of the community, where everyone aims to maximise potential."***

Rationale:

We at Fivemiletown College view ourselves as a 'learning community'. We understand that continued and sustained improvement is dependent upon improving the quality of teaching and learning that occurs on a daily basis. Our expectation is that all pupils are provided with high quality learning experiences. Therefore, there is a strong desire for consistency and clarity so that we can assist pupils to maximise their potential, and simultaneously fulfil our professional satisfactions. This policy aims to support every teacher, enabling them to be consistent in their approach. It offers clarity regarding the expectations of teaching staff, and will act as a professional development tool. FMT teachers can build up a repertoire of expertise, knowing that what they are doing is on a par with what is going on in other classrooms throughout the school. This in turn will raise the standard of teaching and learning across the school, positively impacting pupil achievement at all levels.

The formation of this document has been through a collaborative approach, and it will build on current good practice. It has a firm belief that marries with John Hattie's book '10 Mindframes for Visible Learning' – *It is not just what we do as teachers, but how we think about what we do*. Furthermore, how we as teachers interpret learning will have a significant influence on the way in which we teach. Therefore, the following collaborative definition of learning has been adopted…

"Learning is an **active process** that takes place just **beyond current understanding**, by making sense of new information and in turn **builds upon and makes connections with existing knowledge**."

- **Active process**: product of doing rather receiving e.g. manipulate or apply information.
- **Takes place just beyond a child's current capabilities**. This adheres to Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal of Development (ZPD)…a level where the child cannot master alone. Nevertheless, with support, encouragement and feedback, the child is eventually able to operate independently.
- Build upon existing understanding by **making connections with prior knowledge**, and through successful application will raise self-confidence.

Aims:

By adopting the 'Fivemiletown Framework for learning', we aim:

- To provide high quality learning experiences for all pupils
- To achieve sustainable improvement in teaching and learning across the school
- To create a supportive environment which is conducive to teaching

Objectives

- To use an appropriate range of teaching and learning strategies, which motivate the pupils and engage them purposefully in their work both collaboratively and independently
- To support teachers with clear guidelines and empower positive action
- To achieve consistency in the approach in every classroom throughout the school
- To maximise pupil potential and in turn, academic performance
- To convey and set realistically high expectations which challenge and inspire the pupils
- To give children the skills, knowledge and understanding they require to become confident, disciplined and effective lifelong learners
- To develop the pupils' independence, creativity and ability to manage risks in their learning
- To learn from each other, through the adoption of a collaborative, enquiry based approach to teaching and learning, where practice is shared
- To ensure that learning supports the development of the pupils' cross-curricular skills and their thinking skills and personal capabilities (TSPC)

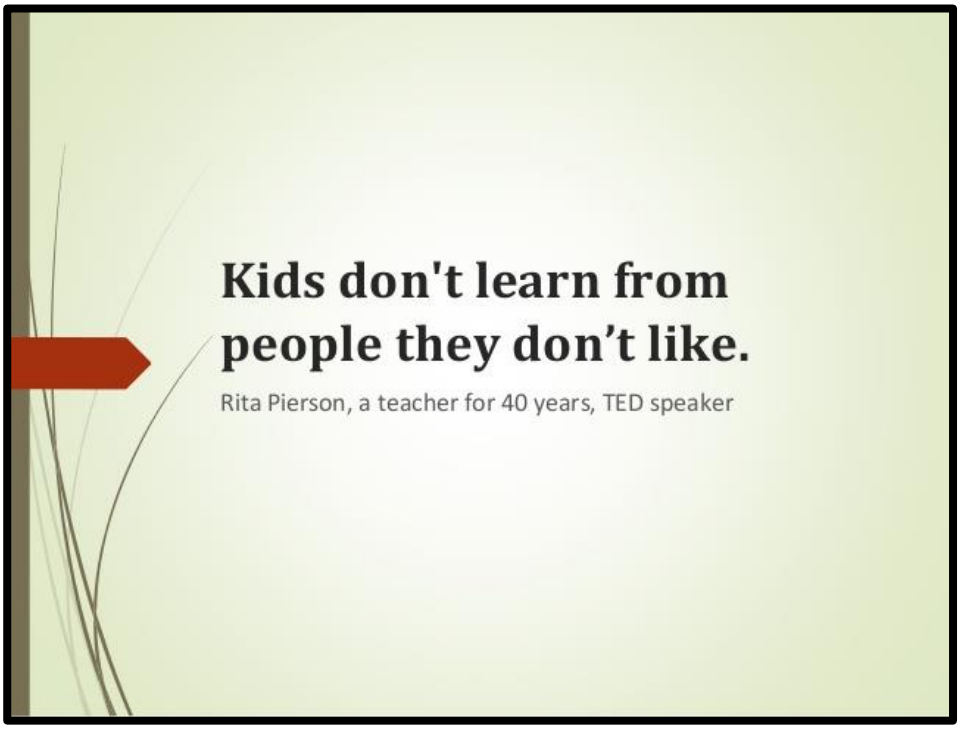
There is no single recipe for improving teaching and learning. However, this policy outlines some of the **key elements** which are crucial to raising standards in teaching and learning in Fivemiletown College. It also sets out a **broad structure** for lessons, based on best practice and research.

RELATIONSHIPS FOR LEARNING

In Fivemiletown College, teachers are expected to model the behaviour they wish to see.

All Teachers, Classroom assistants and other Support staff should:

- Get to know the name of each pupil that they come into contact with.
- Actively build a rapport by discovering interests, likes/dislikes and bring this into lessons
- Be punctual to school and each individual lesson.
- Be smartly attired/presented.
- Be enthusiastic and positive.
- Meet and greet consistency across school.
- Use praise and encouragement to reward.
- Set collaborative class rules with the pupils. Simple, clear and consequential.
- Ensure that all pupils can succeed/achieve the success criteria. (Differentiation)
- Model positive relationships between staff.
- Respect all pupils, forgetting past negative issues.
- Hold high expectations of pupils.
- Instil high expectations by pupils.
- School/Parent/Pupil tripod of trust.



PLANNING FOR LEARNING

Knowledge of Content

- All staff are expected to have full knowledge and understanding of the content that they are delivering and are encouraged to attend relevant CPD courses.
- All staff are expected to have full knowledge of whole school priorities, policies and procedures.

Knowledge of Students

- All staff are expected to know each learner and their respective needs, including underachievers as well as gifted and talented pupils.
- All staff should be aware of the aspirations and inspirations of pupils.
- All staff should have knowledge of any pastoral concerns.

Pedagogy

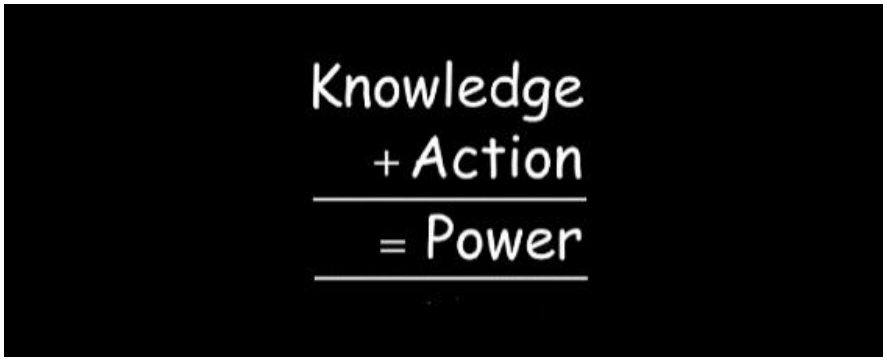
- Two methods to engage learners: 1. Tasks/Activities – emphasis on re-creating rather than reproducing information. 2. Interaction/Intervention – probing and shaping their thinking, helping them clarify and extend their understanding.
- All staff are expected to adhere to whole-school CPD/TPL research and instruction. 'Multiple Intelligence, Learning Styles, Active Learning' should all steer delivery. In addition, key strategies such as 'Effective questioning, Differentiation, and Scaffolding should also be utilised to maximise pupil/class potential.

Knowledge of Resources

- All staff are expected to utilise all relevant resources at their disposal in order to stimulate, engage and maximise pupil potential.
- All staff are expected to be aware of opportunities for cross-curricular work.

Assessment Opportunities

- Summative assessment dates will be communicated at whole-school level leading towards reporting.
- Formative assessment will also be communicated at whole-school level to enable accurate tracking of pupil progress.
- Regular homeworks are expected to be set by all staff and concise feedback provided according to the 'Marking for Improvement' philosophy.



THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Organising Physical Space

- All staff are expected to have a welcoming learning environment with subject-specific text/images on the walls.
- Seating plan visible in every room and located on the wall beside the teacher's desk

Managing Classroom Procedures

- All staff are expected to model…
    1. Meet and greet: Staff present at the door greeting with a smile by name
    2. Start with silence: Staff standing at the front of the room awaiting silence
    3. End and send: Finish with a plenary that recalls the success criteria and links to the next lesson

Establishing a Culture for Learning

- All staff should have high expectations for pupil development.
- All staff should facilitate a curiosity for learning.
- All staff should promote independent student-centred learning.
- All staff are expected to utilise relevant terminology e.g. oracy, cross-curricular skills, thinking skills and personal capabilities
- All staff are expected to 'stretch and challenge' and encourage discovery, critical thinking, taking risk.
- All staff should engage in TPL to incorporate reflection and facilitate staff progression.

Managing Student Behaviour

- All staff are expected to follow the school 'Positive Behaviour Policy'.
- 3 in-class strategies must be utilised and evidenced when attempting to quell negative behaviour, after which the referral hierarchy should be used (HOD-Form Teacher-Year Head-Pastoral Head-SLT)

Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport

- All staff by establishing classroom procedures, developing a culture for learning and promoting/rewarding positive behaviour will benefit from respect and rapport with the pupils that they are facilitating

Active Learning

- All staff must engage pupils, especially boys, by adding competition and utilising strategies such as 'Think, Pair, Share', Group work (Roles – Manager, Recorder, Reporter, Time Keeper), Quizzes, Problem-solving etc

Effective Questioning

- Staff expected to utilise strategies such as…

Pose, Pause, Pounce, Bounce

'Thinking time' is essential before requesting an answer. The average wait time of a teacher is 0.9s…too short. We within FMT College encourage 3-5s. Pose the question, pause and allow thinking time, pounce on a pupil, gain a response and then bounce it to another to see if they can add, explain, review, evaluate etc.

Basketball Questioning

Similar to the above strategy…Teacher asks a question and gets a response. Teacher then asks another pupil about the response provided and gets another pupil to analyse/evaluate. This is much more effective than table tennis questioning, where it simply goes back and forth between teacher and pupil.

KWL Grid

- What I know
- What I want to know
- What I have learned

First two questions to be used after introducing a new topic and the final question to be used as a summative tool at the end of delivery. What I want to know can be guided by the teacher towards the specifications requirements.

Classroom Tactics for effective questioning

- No Hands rule: No raised hands to answer, only to clarify
- Probing: When an answer received, follow-up with probes to confirm and clarify
- Build in wait time
- Create a climate where pupils feel safe to make mistakes: Very important to build confidence and avoids making learners vulnerable. Mistakes are part of the learning process…Not failure but feedback.
- Allow time for collaboration before feedback: Think, Pair, Share
- Dealing with answers: Correct – Why is it correct? What do you think? Incorrect – Prompt, Simplify, Phone a friend?

Assessment

- Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. It is viewed as a valuable formative and summative tool.

Marking for Improvement

- To facilitate the assessment of pupils planning and evaluating skills, pupils will be presented with opportunities to appraise and evaluate both their own and their peer's performance in accordance with clearly defined criteria. Such criteria will be outlined by the teacher. These opportunities may be in the form of 'Peer-Assessment' – Peer-Teaching using resource cards/mark schemes, or 'Self-Assessment' - DIRT (Dedicated Improvement Reflection Time), where pupils evaluate their strengths and areas to improve. In terms of marking, the following grid is used throughout the school.

MARKING KEY

Symbol in the LEFT margin	Written in the text	Indicates	Action (By Pupil)
✓	The point underscored	A good point or correct	I note this point for use in future work
X	The point underscored	An incorrect point	I write down the correct point and/or discuss it with my teacher
?	The point underscored	Something doesn't make sense	I discuss the point with my teacher and amend or expand as necessary
Sp	The word circled	A spelling mistake	I write the correct spelling in the margin
Word	In the text	A word or phrase is missing	I read through my work carefully before handing it in for correction
FS	In the text	A full stop is missing	If necessary, I discuss with my teacher why a full stop is required.
CL	The letter underlined	A missing Capital Letter	If necessary, I discuss with my teacher the reason why a capital letter is required.
NP	In the text	A new paragraph is required	If necessary, I discuss with my teacher the reason why a new paragraph is required.
NAS	A Phrase underlined	Not a Sentence	If necessary, I discuss with my teacher the reason why this is not a sentence.

The aim here is for consistency across the school in terms of marking. Staff training days have encouraged the use of 'dialogue' when marking. When a pupil has not answered the question correctly the following prompts (and others) may be provided, with action and a response to such dialogue taken by the pupil.

- **Action Prompts** – An action is required to improve the quality of the answer e.g. give more detail of the effects

- **Reminder Prompts** – Point made as to something the pupil has forgot to take into account e.g. exam technique – EMAP (Exam Word, Marks/Maths, And, Plan)

- **Question Prompts** – A question is posed to stimulate thinking by the pupil along another line within the question e.g. consider the intensity provided and then attempt the question again

Lesson Structure - Sample

- Hook
- Learning Intentions
- Success Criteria
- Activities (Active Learning, Effective Questioning, Cross Curricular Skills, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities)
- Plenary – Pupil Led (Pupil Oracy, Effective Questioning)
- Review of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria (Self and Peer Assessment)

Hook

To begin the lesson, a hook is an extremely effective way to gain attention, focus and interest. This can be in numerous forms – Object, Image, Verbal reference to a recent event. It is also extremely useful in generating higher level thinking from the outset, as pupils try to divulge the context and link with the subsequent subject content.

Learning Intentions (LI)

Learning Intentions are shared orally and displayed. They are skills based and not connected to the context of the lesson (eg: to be able to write complex sentences in my writing). Children are taught to recognise the difference between a task and its learning objective (separating what they have to do from what they will learn). When marking children's work, the main focus is on meeting the learning objectives. All pupils are clear about how they will achieve the learning objective through clear success criteria/steps to success and will therefore know what is expected of them by the end of the lesson. Learning objectives are the same for all pupils. We want all our pupils to access the same learning and it is through the teaching methods, activities or resources that differentiation is implemented.

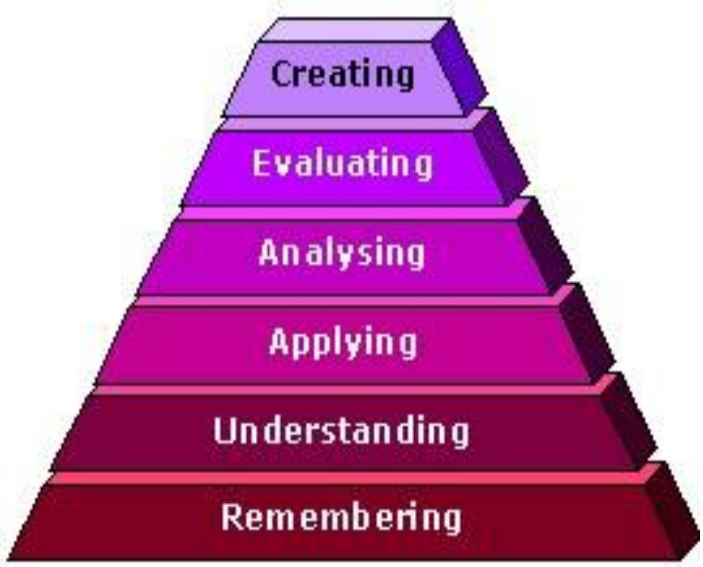
Success Criteria (SC)

Success Criteria/Steps to Success (SC/S2S) will link directly to the learning intention(s). It can be very effective if pupils are actively involved in producing them. In addition, SC can be differentiated to cater for and challenge all pupils, especially the 'gifted and talented' (GT). At the end of the lesson, always refer back to the learning intentions and SC/S2S by encouraging pupils to reflect on what they have learned and are now able to do. In addition, pupils should use the SC to self-assess their own or peer-assess their partner's work.

Activities

'Active Learning' should engage and challenge pupils and make them think. It may also be coupled with 'Effective Questioning'. This is an integral part of assessment. It is about asking questions in a way that elicits maximum feedback, which can then be used to evaluate, plan and expand learning. Using effective questioning means challenging children to deepen their thinking and should link directly with Bloom's Taxonomy. Fewer factual recall questions and more analysing and evaluating questions.

Bloom's Taxonomy



Within the active learning activities, it is likely than many 'Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities' will be extended and developed, while the 'Cross Curricular Skills' of Communication. Using Maths and Using ICT are commonly triggered. If the activity regards assessment, it may include 'Marking for Improvement'. For example, a collaborative task using teacher feedback on a piece of work or a task using sample work marked or to mark. This will engage learners and extend their thinking rationale. Finally, it is essential to provide for all types of learner – Visual (See), Auditory (Hear) and Kinaesthetic (Do) Leaners.

- Plenary
- Review of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria

Both of these areas may be grouped together to ascertain whether the objectives have been met and the content understood. If so, the pupils leave being able to action all Success Criteria. It terms of 'Pupil Oracy', we at Fivemiletown College wish our pupils to be able to express themselves orally. The Plenary stage is an ideal opportunity to develop such a skill and it can be coupled with a Teacher who probes, within their Effective Questioning. In addition, at this time 'Pupil Self/Peer-Assessment' are likely to play a role. They can review their own work or that of a peers, to ascertain progress towards the pre-set learning objectives. Once children understand how to assess their current knowledge and the gaps in it, they will have a clearer idea of how they can help themselves (and their peers) to progress.

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

Showing Professionalism

- All staff are expected to be punctual to school and lessons, and talk positively about all aspects of school life to pupils.
- At no time should staff talk to pupils regarding other pupils/classes in a negative way

Reflecting on Teaching

- Self-Evaluation should be a constant theme of daily teaching. At summative points e.g. end of topic, reflection should then be at Departmental meetings in order to build on good practice and what worked well, but also on the other hand to make 'tweaks' to improve. At this time, pupil feedback is essential in order to involve all stakeholders.

Maintaining Accurate Records

- All staff are expected to maintain accurate attendance and academic information. This will be essential to intervene as necessary in future.

Participating in the Professional Community

- FMT is a 'learning community'…none of us know more than all of us! Therefore, a collective and collaborative approach is the culture all staff should commit to, with 'sharing' central to such. This adheres directly to John Hattie's work (published in Visible Learning for Teachers 2011) as the most important factor influencing pupil achievement – 'Collective Teacher Efficacy'. A common belief that by working together, we as teachers can positively impact the outcomes of our pupils.

Growing and Developing Professionally

- All staff are encouraged to reflect on a continuous basis and in doing, focus on not only what you are doing, but also on what you think of what you are doing. This leads towards 2018 research by Professor John Hattie and cited in his book, '10 Mindframes for Visible Learning.' His overview is that 'success is not only based upon competencies, but more on mindframes; less on what we do and more on how we think about what we do.'
- All staff are encouraged to support one another in a professional capacity i.e. through events and celebrating success.
- All staff are encouraged to continually embrace professional learning and by doing so, will have enthusiasm as the only professional usually in the classroom.
- All staff are encouraged to participate in ALC sub-committee groups.
- All staff are encouraged to become involved in shared education activities, working and sharing practice with staff in our partner school.
- Staff involved in collaborative teaching are facilitated to plan, share and review with teachers in our partner school. The TCN Model will extend across schools to further facilitate TPL.

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