LARNE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

1.   **INTRODUCTION**
1.1   The Governors of Larne Grammar School believe that high quality teaching and learning lie at the heart of a successful school. The purpose of this policy is to provide a statement of the key principles that underpin teaching and learning in the School and which all teachers will adopt. This policy is written in support of the ethos of the School as articulated in the Ethos and Vision of the school.

1.2   The Governors retain ultimate responsibility for all matters pertaining to teaching and learning including the appointment of all teaching and support staff. However, they delegate responsibility for the development and implementation of teaching and learning strategy to the Principal and the Senior Leadership Team.

1.3   The Senior Leadership Team is committed to ensuring that good practice in relation to teaching and learning is shared between staff.

2   **THE EVALUATION OF PRACTICE**
2.1   High standards in teaching and learning will be maintained by means of a rigorous quality assurance process.

2.2   Self-evaluation will underpin this quality assurance process and will be embedded at all levels of the institution. Structures and procedures will be put in place to ensure that teachers are encouraged to develop as reflective practitioners. The School will make use of the guidance provided by the Department of Education in the "Together Towards Improvement" document.

2.3   Subject departments will be required to undertake regular self-evaluation exercises which will draw on a range of sources of evidence including performance data, the views of pupils and parents, lesson observations, scrutiny of pupil work, teacher planning and departmental documentation.

2.4   Teaching and learning at whole-school level will be evaluated against a series of quality indicators many of which are outlined in the DE document "Every School a Good School". Baseline and benchmarking measures will be used to set whole school and departmental academic targets at the beginning of every academic year and performance will be measured against these targets. Value added measures will also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

2.5   The purpose of self-evaluation will be to identify strengths and areas for development. The outcomes of all of the exercises outlined above will be the implementation of improvement strategies which will be incorporated into departmental and school action plans and will, in turn, be evaluated the following year.

3   **METHODOLOGY**
3.1   The key to effective teaching and learning lies in the relationships that are fostered between the teacher and his/her pupils. Respect for all pupils, enthusiasm for both the subject and the learning process, a sense of humour, effective classroom management skills, empathy, compassion, professionalism and support can all play a more important role in encouraging learning than the use of any specific teaching or assessment methodologies. The School is committed to maintaining an environment in which teachers inspire pupils to learn and act as positive role models for the young people in their care, modelling the kind of attitudes and behaviours expected of the pupils.

3.2   The School recognises that pupils learn in different ways and pupils will be encouraged to discover how they learn best. Teachers should adopt a range of teaching styles and methodologies so as to ensure that pupils with different learning styles are catered for within their classroom.

3.3   The emphasis within all classrooms should be on the promotion of active learning strategies. Teachers should seek to engage pupils as partners in the learning process rather than simply deliver information to passive students.

3.4   Teachers will provide pupils with a level of support that is appropriate to their age and ability but will also adopt methodologies that develop the pupils as independent learners. This will involve helping pupils to develop the necessary skills, attitudes and dispositions in order to enable them to take ownership of and responsibility for their own learning. Such skills include self-management, research and note-making skills, the ability to study independently, to set goals and plan how to achieve them, time-management, the ability to take risks for learning, creativity and thinking skills. They are all underpinned by an intrinsic motivation to learn and to succeed. Each one of these skills and attitudes can be developed as the result of the teaching methodologies and classroom practice of the teaching staff in the school and are as important in preparing pupils for examination success and for life after school as the taught curriculum.

3.5 The teaching staff will be encouraged to make effective use of high quality teaching resources in order to support the learning process. The Governors and Senior Leadership Team are committed to supporting teaching and learning through the provision of such resources. Funds will be made available through the annual departmental budget allocation for the purchase of resources. Each Head of Department or subject leader will be responsible for the requisition and allocation of teaching resources and will be accountable for their use.

3.6 It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that all teachers are equipped with the skills to deliver high quality teaching and learning through the provision of relevant and appropriate in-service training. A major focus of the School's CPD programme will be on developing the pedagogical skills of the classroom practitioners. One of the most effective ways of achieving this is through teachers sharing good practice with one another and learning from each other. Opportunities will be created for teachers to discuss pedagogy with one another and observe one another teach. Collaborative planning will also be encouraged. All teachers will be expected to engage fully with this process and continually seek to challenge and improve their own performance.

4   CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

4.1 Pupils learn best when they are in an orderly and safe environment. The primary responsibility for creating such an environment lies with the classroom teacher.

4.2 The approaches adopted by staff should emphasise the School's ethos by focusing on positive behaviour strategies. At the heart of positive behaviour lies a good relationship between pupils and staff based on mutual respect.

4.3 Details of behaviour management strategies can be found in the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy and associated procedures.

5   LITERACY

5.1 It is the policy of this School to:
- promote literacy and improve the literacy skills of all pupils
- enable pupils to acquire the highest standard of literacy of which they are capable
- implement strategies which will allow for the early identification of pupils with literacy problems and then provide those pupils with appropriate support.

5.2 All pupils have an entitlement to a learning environment that provides opportunities across the curriculum for them to apply their literacy skills competently and coherently.

5.3 Literacy means much more than basic reading and writing; it is the ability to use all modes of language (reading, writing, talking and listening) well and effectively. The School recognises the importance of standard English and good literacy skills as being fundamental to personal and social development and to academic success and 'employability' in a competitive environment.

5.4 Whilst acknowledging the academic ability of all of the pupils in the school it is also necessary to recognise that some of them will experience literacy problems caused by any one of a number of factors including specific learning difficulties related to literacy, English as an additional language (EAL) and spoken or written English which is not always appropriate to purpose, context or audience.

5.5 All members of the teaching staff have a role to play in developing pupils' literacy skills and competence within their own area of study.

5.6 The Senior Leadership Team has an obligation to ensure that proper planning occurs at departmental level and that effective whole-school and departmental structures are in place to support literacy. The Vice Principal (Curriculum) has specific responsibility in this regard. All Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that literacy is developed through their subject and is included in their departmental Schemes of Work. The Literacy Co-ordinator has primary responsibility for formulating, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the whole-school literacy strategy. (S)he is responsible for advising the SLT accordingly.

5.7 The Literacy Co-ordinator should liaise with the Heads of Department to ensure that there is a consistent approach to teaching literacy across the curriculum and that the teaching and learning undertaken in one subject supports that which occurs in all the others.

5.8 Time to consider the promotion and improvement of literacy will be periodically included in Staff Development Days. All departments will be encouraged to identify further training needs relating to the development of literacy.

5.9 The Literacy Co-ordinator will endeavour to liaise with the literacy co-ordinators of the main feeder primary schools in order to ease the KS2/KS3 transition for pupils and ensure that the work undertaken in Larne Grammar School builds on the knowledge and skills possessed by the pupils. Year 8 English Schemes of Work should reflect the work of pupils in KS2.

5.10   The baseline ability of each pupil will be measured on entry to Year 8 by means of a range of indicators including the KS2 level supplied by the primary school, other standardised scores achieved in the last three years of primary education, baseline testing and other standardised literacy measures. The Literacy Co-ordinator will disseminate this information to the relevant Year 8 teachers and to the SENCO and Assistant SENCO. On the basis of this information strategies will be developed to support the literacy development of individual learners. The progress of individual pupils will be tracked and measured by means of baseline testing, internal assessments and end of year examinations.

5.11   A combination of rigorous standardised assessment, the use of performance data to track progress, the professional judgement of teachers and the self-referral of pupils/parents will help enable the early identification of pupils who are experiencing literacy problems. Appropriate strategies, including those instigated by the SENCO, will be put in place to support those pupils in line with the principles outlined in Section 13 of this policy.

5.12   The School Library and ICT facilities will be used to support the promotion and improvement of literacy. The Literacy Co-ordinator, the School Librarian and the E-Learning Co-ordinator have responsibility for developing the use of these facilities in support of literacy.

5.13   The School will report on the progression of each pupil in Key Stage 3 in Communication, in line with the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

5.14   The Literacy Co-ordinator will review the Literacy strategy on a regular basis and report the findings of this evaluation to the Senior Leadership Team.

6   NUMERACY

6.1   It is the policy of this School to:
- promote numeracy and improve the numeracy skills of all pupils
- enable pupils to acquire the highest standard of numeracy of which they are capable
- implement strategies which will allow for the early identification of pupils with numeracy problems and then provide those pupils with appropriate support.

6.2   All pupils have an entitlement to a learning environment that provides opportunities across the curriculum for them to apply their mathematical skills competently and coherently.

6.3   Numeracy is more than knowing about number and number operations. It includes an ability and inclination to solve numerical problems, including those involving money or measures. It also demands a familiarity with the ways in which numerical information is gathered by counting and measuring and is presented in graphs, charts and tables. Pupils who are numerate should be able to communicate mathematically through explaining, predicting and reasoning. They should be willing and able to use and confidently apply mathematics in everyday life.

6.4   All members of the teaching staff have a role to play in developing pupils' numeracy skills and competence within their own area of study.

6.5   Teachers will be encouraged to place an emphasis on the use of mental maths strategies. The appropriate use of ICT to support the development of numeracy will also be promoted.

6.5   The Senior Leadership Team has an obligation to ensure that proper planning occurs at departmental level and that effective whole-school and departmental structures are in place to support numeracy. The Vice Principal (Curriculum) has specific responsibility in this regard. All Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that numeracy is developed through their subject and is included in their departmental Schemes of Work. The Numeracy Co-ordinator has primary responsibility for formulating, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the whole-school numeracy strategy. (S)he is responsible for advising the SLT accordingly.

6.6   The Numeracy Co-ordinator should liaise with the Heads of Department to ensure that there is a consistent approach to teaching numeracy across the curriculum and that the teaching and learning undertaken in one subject supports that which occurs in all the others.

6.7   Time to consider the promotion and improvement of numeracy will be periodically included in Staff Development Days. All departments will be encouraged to identify further training needs relating to the development of numeracy.

6.8   The Numeracy Co-ordinator will endeavour to liaise with the numeracy co-ordinators of the main feeder primary schools in order to ease the KS2/KS3 transition for pupils and ensure that the work undertaken in Larne builds on the knowledge and skills possessed by the pupils. Year 8 Maths Schemes of Work should reflect the work of pupils in KS2.

6.9   The baseline ability of each pupil will be measured on entry to Year 8 by means of a range of indicators including the KS2 level supplied by the primary school, other standardised scores achieved in the last three years of primary education, baseline testing and other standardised numeracy measures. The Numeracy Co-ordinator will disseminate this information to the

relevant Year 8 teachers and to the SENCO and Assistant SENCO. On the basis of this information strategies will be developed to support the literacy development of individual learners. The progress of individual pupils will be tracked and measured by means of baseline testing, internal assessments and end of year examinations.

6.10   A combination of rigorous standardised assessment, the use of performance data to track progress, the professional judgement of teachers and the self-referral of pupils/parents will help enable the early identification of pupils who are experiencing numeracy problems. Appropriate strategies will be put in place to support those pupils in line with the principles outlined in Section 13 of this policy.

6.11   The School will report on the progression of each pupil in Key Stage 3 in Using Mathematics, in line with the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

6.12   The Numeracy Co-ordinator will review the Numeracy strategy on a regular basis and report the findings of this evaluation to the Senior Leadership Team.

7   THE ROLE OF ICT

7.1   ICT has an undeniable potential to improve the way that pupils learn, the way teachers teach and the ways in which staff communicate and manage.

7.2   Pupils will be given the opportunity to develop their ICT capabilities and skills through a combination of discrete ICT classes in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and the inclusion of ICT based activities into all subjects.

7.3   The E-Learning Co-ordinator will conduct a regular audit of ICT based learning activities utilised by subject departments with KS3 pupils. This will ensure that all pupils gain access to a minimum entitlement in terms of the skills and capabilities that they develop and the range of ICT applications that they have experience of using.

7.4   The School will report on the progression of each pupil in Key Stage 3 in Using ICT, in line with the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

7.5   The effective use of ICT has a significant role to play in facilitating and enhancing teaching and learning. The Governors and Senior Leadership Team will seek to equip the teaching staff with the necessary hardware and software they require and will encourage the use of ICT by providing training as appropriate. Teachers will be encouraged to be innovative in their methodology and seek to utilise ICT in such a way as to inspire, motivate, aid and enhance the learning process for pupils in all year groups.

7.6   Staff training and support will be focused on providing teaching and support staff with the knowledge, confidence and skills to enable them to:
- effectively manage the use of ICT in the classroom
- use ICT in a relevant and effective way to support teaching and learning
- recognise, manage and prevent potential misuse of ICT by pupils
- use SIMS.net in order to carry out administrative tasks including report-writing and recording of assessment data

7.7   The School will utilise the Fronter Virtual Learning Environment in order to support the learning that takes place in class. E-learning is a key component of the School's vision for providing a broader curriculum provision for pupils in KS4 and Post-16 by means of collaboration with other educational providers. The Fronter VLE and the use of Video-Conferencing Technology may be used as a means of supporting distance learning and extending the educational experience offered to pupils.

7.8   An E-Learning Strategy Group, under the direction of the E-Learning Co-ordinator, will provide advice and guidance to the SLT on all matters relating to the use of ICT and ICT Strategy. The group will also promote the use of ICT to the staff as a whole.

8   ASSESSMENT

8.1   Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

8.2   The School will seek to promote the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies with pupils in all year groups. These strategies will include:
- the teacher sharing clear learning intentions with pupils
- the sharing or negotiation of success criteria
- pupils working with the teacher to set individual or personalised targets for improvement
- the teacher encouraging pupils to take risks for learning
- the teacher providing pupils with advice on what to improve and how to improve it
- pupils undertaking peer and self-assessment
- teacher and pupils celebrating success against agreed success criteria
- peer and self evaluation of learning by the students.

8.3   Assessment will predominantly be formative and even end-of-unit tests and mock examinations will have a diagnostic element. Summative testing will be employed in the form of end-of-year exams and the results of these assessments will be reported to parents as part of the pupils' annual report.

8.4   Baseline testing e.g. CAT assessments will be utilised in order to set academic targets for pupils, allow teachers to track pupil progress against these targets and provide the School with value-added data. When appropriate, the results of these assessments will be shared with pupils.

9   DIFFERENTIATION (INCLUDING SEN AND G&T STRATEGIES)

9.1   The School is committed to the principle of personalised learning. This means that teaching and learning must be tailored to meet the individual needs of learners.

9.2   While all pupils in the school will be academically very able there will still be significant variations in their ability within individual subjects and their academic performance across the curriculum. Pupils will not be streamed according to academic ability although, timetable permitting, there may be some setting of pupils in Key Stage 4.

9.3   Baseline testing will help identify those pupils who require additional support. Furthermore performance data from the pupils' primary schools along with internal assessment data will be utilised to diagnose the educational requirements of individual pupils.

9.4   Teachers will make use of some or all of the following differentiation strategies with in the classroom:
- differentiation by task;
- differentiation by teacher support;
- differentiation by resource;
- differentiation by outcome;
- use of buddy system.

9.5   Many of the pupils in the school can be classified as being Gifted and/or Talented. A combination of extension, acceleration and enrichment strategies will be utilised in order to meet their educational needs. Specific examples of Gifted and Talented provision include:
- attendance at lectures;
- entry into competitions;
- involvement in mentoring schemes;
- use of VLE discussion forums;
- preparation for Oxbridge application;
- involvement in enrichment courses;
- extra-curricular sporting, musical and dramatic activities;
- early entry into public examinations;
- after-school and lunchtime classes leading to external qualifications e.g. German, COPE, Space Science Technology.

"Meeting the educational needs of the Gifted and Talented is about building on good general school provision, not about providing something entirely different." (Professor Deborah Eyre, 2001)

10   REMOVING BARRIERS TO LEARNING

10.1   The School recognises the individuality of all learners and the fact that, at some stage, most will face difficulty in their learning. The Governors and staff are committed to identifying and removing the barriers to learning that many of the pupils face.

10.2   These barriers to learning may take many different forms, for example:
- linguistic barriers for newcomer pupils or for those for whom English is an additional language (EAL)
- educational barriers for pupils with a wide range of Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- pupils who are experiencing emotional problems caused by family or other difficulties
- pupils with low educational aspirations or those who have become disaffected or disengaged with the learning process
- cultural or religious differences
- attendance (see Attendance Policy)

10.3   The pastoral support offered by the Year Heads, the Mentoring team and the counselling service will play a key role in helping pupils overcome difficulties they may be experiencing in their learning. The Mentoring Programme and the guidance provided by the SENCO will similarly provide educational support for pupils when it is required.

10.4   Effectively identifying and removing barriers to learning will rely on good communication and

increased flexibility between staff and also between staff and the pupils and their parents.

10.5 The expertise of outside agencies will be utilised when appropriate and additional funding will be sought in order to provide targeted support for individual pupils.

10.6 The Senior Leadership Team will endeavour to ensure that appropriate training will be provided for staff, teaching and non-teaching, to ensure that they can identify and remove the barriers to learning, thus allowing all students to develop academically, emotionally, physically and morally and achieve their full potential.

10.7 The strategies implemented will be evaluated by monitoring the progress of the individual pupils involved.

11 THE ROLE OF SUPPORT STAFF

11.1 Support staff have an important role in the teaching and learning process. In particular adult assistants (classroom and general assistants) are a valuable resource for supporting the needs of pupils with SEN.

11.2 It is important that the role and remit of adult assistants is clearly understood by all teachers in the school. This should be on the agenda of at least one staff meeting per year.

11.3 At all times adult assistants should be working within school policies and promoting inclusion and independence for the pupils. Class teachers should be vigilant to ensure that "learned helplessness" is avoided.

11.4 Under the direction of the SENCO and class teacher the adult assistants should undertake a range of duties to support pupils with SEN including:
- supporting the class teacher in the delivery of the curriculum;
- preparation of practical activities;
- delivering one-to-one support as identified in education plans;
- ensuring the health and safety of the pupils;
- working with small groups giving additional support;
- assisting the pupil in moving around the school;
- motivating and encouraging reluctant learners;
- modifying and adapting materials;
- supporting planning and record keeping;
- promoting inclusion;
- assisting with monitoring and evaluating pupil progress.

In addition each adult assistant should be used to offer help to Heads of Department when time allows or if the SEN pupil is absent or in examinations. The adult assistant may also assist the class teacher with photocopying, displays and collation of materials as time and circumstances allow always remembering that their primary responsibility is the care of the SEN pupil.

11.5 Technical and auxiliary staff will be utilised to support teaching and learning as and where appropriate. They will primarily be used in practical subjects and to provide ICT support across the school.

11.6 All support staff will be provided with all necessary training including child protection training.

12 THE PUPIL VOICE

12.1 The School recognises that pupils can provide a unique insight into their own learning. By working in partnership with pupils the School will seek to enhance teaching and learning and provide the best possible educational experience for all students. It is also recognised that it is important to pupils that they are consulted about the educational experience they receive.

12.2 The School Council is the most visible structure to facilitate the pupil voice.

12.3 The School is committed to facilitating the pupil voice in other ways. The Senior Leadership Team will endeavour to create a culture whereby pupils are viewed as partners in the learning process.

13 RAISING STANDARDS

13.1 The School is committed to a process of continuous school improvement and is determined to take all reasonable steps to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential.

13.2 The strategies and procedures outlined in this policy should ensure that pupils are fully supported in their learning and the teaching and learning that is delivered to pupils is of the highest quality.

13.3 Pupils will be encouraged to work in collaboration with their teachers in order to set academic targets. These academic targets will be based on baseline and benchmarking data and will provide a measure of the child's potential. Such target-setting exercises will act as a motivation for pupils and will allow teachers to monitor and track the progress of individual pupils in order to ensure that they are on course to fulfil their potential. Teachers will initiate appropriate

intervention strategies, which may involve the parents of the individuals concerned, when there is evidence that pupils are "at risk" of not achieving their target grade.

13.4 The Mentoring Programme will be utilised in order to provide targeted support to pupils who are underachieving either as a result of academic problems including but not exclusively pupils with SEN or EAL, or as a result of difficulties due to attitude, behavioural problems or disengagement. These schemes will involve members of the teaching staff but pupils will also be used as peer mentors.

14 PERSONALISED LEARNING

14.1 Throughout this policy there has been a deliberate emphasis on the need for learning to be personalised to each individual pupil. The key elements of personalised learning contained in this policy are summarised as follows:

- a curriculum with the breadth, depth and flexibility to allow all pupils to follow a programme of study that is appropriate to their ability, interests and aspirations;
- teachers having high expectations of every child;
- assessment strategies that provide individualised guidance for pupils on the actions they need to take in order to improve;
- pupil target-setting procedures which allow the students to set individual targets and develop individualised learning plans;
- the use of teaching methodologies which engage and stimulate all types of learners and which are sufficiently differentiated in order to provide the appropriate level of challenge and support to all pupils;
- additional personalised support for pupils who require it e.g. SEN/EAL support, academic and pastoral mentoring.

15 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

15.1 The quality of Teaching and Learning in Larne Grammar School is continually monitored through a range of monitoring and evaluation structures and processes, many of which are referred to in this and other policies.

This policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate and on a regular basis and in the light of guidance from the Department of Education, developments in technology, pedagogy and best practice guidance.