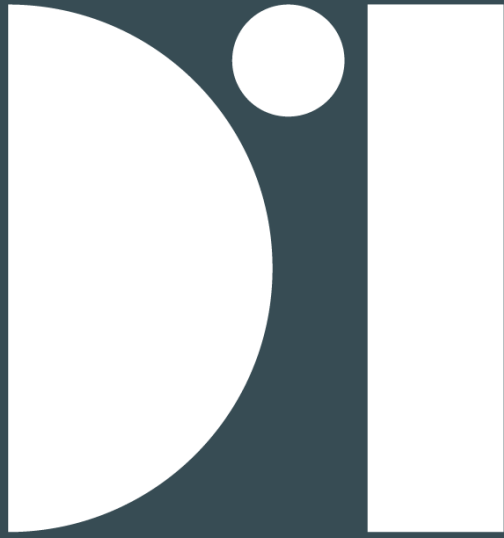




THE DONALDSON TRUST

The National Body for Neurodiversity

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

Version: 4

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Owner: Angela Evans, Head of Learning Services

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Document Control

Version:

Version	Date	Owner	Reviewer	Approver	Amend
1	September 2022	Head of Learning Services	Kath Cooper	ELT	New
2	January 2023	Head of Learning Services	Kath Cooper	ELT	Amend
3	April 2023	Head of Learning Services	Kath Cooper	ELT	Amend to incorporate assessment
4	September 2025	Head of Learning Services	Angela Evans	Chief Operating Officer	Update to reflect secondary curriculum

Next Review Due: September 2027

References:

- Classroom Jotter, Organisation and Display Policy
- Curriculum Rationale
- Assessment Rationale
- Moderation Policy
- Quality Assurance Calendar
- Observation Form
- Forward Planning Documents
- How Good is Our School (HGIOS4)

Introduction

The Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Policy provides a coherent framework to ensure that educational provision across SLC is of the highest possible quality, is aligned with Donaldson's mission and strategic objectives and meets the needs of a diverse pupil body.

This policy establishes clear expectations for pedagogical (teaching) practice, to promote consistency and fairness in assessment and to support the continuous improvement of teaching and learning through evidence-informed approaches.

The policy will be formally reviewed on a two-year cycle to ensure its continued relevance, effectiveness and alignment with evolving educational priorities, regulatory requirements and sector best practice.

Interim updates may be undertaken if significant changes to curriculum design, assessment practices or external frameworks occur.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals engaged in the design, delivery and evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment within SLC. For the purposes of this document, these individuals are collectively referred to as colleagues and includes teachers, learning and wellbeing practitioners and therapists.

The policy also applies to all pupils enrolled in SLC.

Other external contributors to the teaching, learning or assessment process are to operate in accordance with this policy where relevant to their role.

Aims

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy aims to:

- Ensure high-quality provision by establishing clear and consistent standards for teaching, learning, and assessment across the school
- Promote pupil engagement and success through the creation of inclusive and supportive learning environments
- Embed fairness, transparency and equity in assessment processes, ensuring that all pupils are assessed in ways that are valid and reliable
- Encourage continuous improvement of teaching and learning practices through reflective practice, professional development and the use of evidence-based pedagogical approaches

Features of Highly Effective Teaching

The features of highly effective teaching practice are clearly outlined in How Good Is Our School? (HGIOS4).

At SLC, teaching colleagues must use the principles of HGIOS4, 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment, to guide and enhance their practice.

The key features of highly effective practice include:

- **Positive and Nurturing Learning Environment:** Learning is built on supportive, respectful and appropriately challenging relationships, leading to high-quality outcomes
- **Recognition of Achievement:** Pupils' achievements, both in and out of school, are recognised, recorded and linked to the development of knowledge and skills for life, learning, and work

- **Active Pupil Engagement:** Pupils take an active role in the school and wider community, regularly participating in leadership opportunities, including leading learning activities
- **High-Quality Feedback:** Pupils receive precise, constructive feedback, enabling them to understand their progress and next steps in learning
- **Peer Feedback:** Pupils are supported to give effective feedback to peers, helping each other improve and reflect on learning
- **Evidence-Informed Practice:** Colleagues access, evaluate and apply relevant findings from educational research and professional reading to enhance teaching and learning
- **Proportionate Planning:** Lesson planning is manageable and clearly identifies what pupils need to learn and how it will be assessed

- **Assessment Aligned to Learning Needs:** Assessment approaches are individualised to pupil needs, enabling them to demonstrate their learning effectively
- **Robust Evidence for Assessment:** Assessment judgements are supported by a well-documented body of evidence, informing next steps in learning
- **Effective Reporting and Processes:** Assessment and reporting processes are practical and drive improvements in teaching and learning
- **Tracking and Monitoring:** Colleagues use tracking and monitoring effectively to secure improved outcomes for all pupils
- **Data-Informed Practice:** Teachers have well-developed data analysis skills, using insights to inform planning, support and improvement strategies

By embedding these features into everyday practice, SLC ensures that every pupil benefits from a high-quality, consistent and responsive learning experience.

Curriculum

All pupils have a right and entitlement to the highest quality of education to develop their personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential (UNCRC articles 28 and 29).

In SLC the curriculum will:

- Have breadth, balance, relevance, coherence, progression and continuity
- Promote mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing
- Ensure there is equity of access for all pupils
- Provide experiences that are appropriate and teaching techniques that support high expectations
- Provide parents / carers with curriculum information relevant to their child

- Be subject to planned evaluation and review

Teachers are responsible for maintaining an excellent subject and pedagogical knowledge and for ensuring the best possible learning opportunities are planned, delivered, monitored and evaluated.

Teachers are responsible for adapting their teaching to ensure that all pupils are engaged, motivated and enabled to succeed.

Teachers are expected to ensure that pupils who are experiencing difficulty are identified early and given necessary support, encouragement, guidance and, if necessary, different teaching styles and differentiated learning.

Teachers may use schemes of work but are expected to individualise it to meet the needs of the pupils in their class. Teachers should avoid using Twinkl.

Teachers are responsible for the planning, preparation, delivery and evaluation of opportunities which enable all pupils to reach their full potential.

Teachers should constantly consider the pace, breadth, coherence, progression and challenge within learning to ensure that every pupil is confident, motivated and developed.

Recognising and celebrating success through assemblies and displays is especially important, as is sharing learning successes with families.

Lesson Structure

Each teacher must use the designated lesson plan PowerPoint for every lesson. For pupils who follow an individual timetable, a corresponding lesson plan PowerPoint must be prepared and used to ensure learning is structured, consistent and individualised to their needs.

Each lesson should include the following:

- Direct links to forward planning
- Learning intention and success criteria
- Links to skills / DYW
- Lesson hook / starter / introduction
- Links to prior learning
- Teaching of new learning
- Clear differentiation of learning
- Personalised support
- Evidence of engagement, challenge, depth, breadth
- Pupil voice
- Links to other curricular areas
- Appropriate assessment strategies
- Plenary
- Next steps

Learning Styles

The school recognises that pupils learn in diverse and individual ways.

Teaching should be planned and delivered using a multi-sensory, differentiated approach designed to engage all pupils and maximise their progress. Lessons should incorporate a variety of methods and resources to stimulate interest, accommodate different learning preferences and remove barriers to participation.

Pupils should be provided with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and apply their learning in meaningful contexts.

Across the school day, learning experiences should include whole-class instruction, collaborative group activities, paired work and independent learning to ensure the development of both subject knowledge and essential skills such as cooperation, critical thinking and self-direction.

Observation of Teaching and Learning

The lesson observation process is fundamental to enhancing and improving the learning experience for pupils, while also supporting colleagues in the ongoing development of their teaching practice and management of learning.

Lesson observation is designed to be developmental, collaborative and constructive, ensuring that teaching standards are maintained and continuously improved.

Responsibilities of Teachers

- Be familiar with, and uphold, the standards of performance expected of them
- Keep up to date with the standards of professional practice set by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
- Undertake appropriate continuing professional development (CPD) activities relating to the improvement of teaching, learning, and assessment
- Engage fully with any action plans developed as a result of the observation process

Responsibilities of the Head of Learning Services and Principal Teacher:

- Being familiar with all policies and procedures associated with lesson observation
- Ensuring that the observation process is applied fairly, consistently and transparently
- Clearly communicating the standards of performance and expectations to all colleagues
- Ensuring that the professional discussion following lesson observation is timely, supportive and focused on improvement
- Use the Observation Form and provide timely feedback orally and in writing

- Keep up to date with the standards of professional practice set by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
- Undertake appropriate continuing professional development (CPD) activities relating to the improvement of teaching, learning, and assessment
- Engage fully with any action plans developed as a result of the observation process

Observation Process

All colleagues who deliver timetabled or planned teaching sessions will be observed.

Each member of teaching colleagues will receive at least four formal observations per year, normally one per term.

In addition, all teaching colleagues are required to observe at least one colleague per academic year, to encourage professional dialogue, peer learning and the sharing of effective practice.

The Head of Learning Services and Principal Teacher will also conduct regular learning walks to monitor the quality of learning and teaching across the school. Constructive feedback will be provided where appropriate to celebrate effective practice and to identify areas for development.

Assessment

The *SLC Assessment Rationale* provides the framework through which educational objectives are set, progress is monitored, and attainment is recognised.

Guided by the principles and processes of effective assessment, we aim to:

- Monitor progress and support learning through timely, accurate and constructive feedback
- Recognise and celebrate pupils' achievements, both academic and personal, within and out with school
- Guide future planning, teaching and curriculum development, ensuring provision is responsive to pupils' needs
- Inform parents and the wider community of achievement, maintaining transparency and fostering collaboration
- Ensure continuity during periods of transition, enabling smooth progression between classes and phases of education
- Comply with statutory requirements, meeting all local and national expectations for assessment and reporting

What is meant by Assessment?

Assessment is carried out to identify what pupils know, understand, and can apply. It is a vital component of the learning process, enabling the evaluation and tracking of progress, the planning of next steps, the involvement of pupils and parents in learning and the recognition and celebration of success.

Assessment also provides an essential mechanism for monitoring the impact and effectiveness of teaching and learning.

The purposes of assessment include:

- Supporting and assessing pupils' learning, monitoring their progress and identifying next steps
- Reporting clearly to parents and carers, both in writing and through discussion, so that they understand their child's progress and how they can support learning at home
- Formally recognising pupils' achievements through profiles and qualifications

- Celebrating achievements across the curriculum, including attainment in the Senior Phase, which builds on earlier learning and supports progression to further study, training, or employment

Curriculum Areas

Learning in the primary and Broad General Education stage is organised across eight curriculum areas, each of which contains 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 structured around a series of Experiences and Outcomes (Es and Os). Experiences describe the learning opportunities pupils will encounter. Outcomes represent what the learning will achieve, often framed from the pupil's perspective, such as "I can..." or "I am able to..." .

Focus of Assessment

Teachers assess what pupils know, understand and can do within the Es and Os framework. Progress and achievement are evaluated across three dimensions:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Skills
- Attributes and capabilities

In addition, three key areas are embedded across all curriculum areas and are the responsibility of all teachers and practitioners:

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

Senior Phase of Learning

From S4 to S6, pupils enter the Senior Phase of Learning, which builds on their Broad General Education (BGE) and supports them in achieving qualifications, developing skills for learning, life and work, and preparing for sustained positive destinations.

Assessment in the Senior Phase recognises both academic and wider achievements, with opportunities to gain a range of qualifications, including National Qualifications, vocational awards and other accredited pathways.

Teachers use assessment to track attainment, identify support needs and guide pupils towards personalised learning pathways.

Importantly, assessment at this stage also supports pupils in reflecting on their progress and planning their next steps in education, training, or employment.

How are pupils being assessed?

Progress is assessed not solely through tests, but through the learning that takes place within the classroom and in a variety of settings beyond the classroom.

Evidence of pupils' progress and achievements is drawn from their day-to-day engagement with learning and the products of their efforts - what they write, say, create or perform.

Progress over time is systematically tracked using individual monitoring tools, including:

- Health and Wellbeing (HWB) tracking documents
- Literacy and Numeracy tracking records
- Termly updates of Boxall Profiles
- Individual Education Plans
- Attainment Overview

This approach ensures that assessment captures a holistic picture of each pupil's learning journey, recognising both formal and informal achievements and supporting personalised next steps in learning.

Gathering Evidence

Evidence of pupils' progress and achievement is collected through a range of structured and reflective approaches to provide a comprehensive view of learning.

Evidence of learning can be gathered in many forms, depending on the curricular area, age of pupils and learning context. This can include:

- Written work e.g. classwork, assignments, essays, reports, research projects
- Practical work e.g. experiments, art projects, technology or computing projects, construction or modelling tasks
- Oral evidence e.g. responses to questions in class, group or paired discussions, presentations, performance
- Observation e.g. teacher observation of skills, peer observation and feedback, engagement in discussion
- Digital evidence e.g. video, audio, screenshots
- Self-Assessment e.g. reflection journals or learning logs, goal-setting sheets and progress trackers, self-rated checklists or rubrics

- Peer Assessment e.g. peer marking of work using agreed criteria, peer feedback in discussions or collaborative projects
- Tests and Quizzes e.g. formative assessments, summative assessments
- Standardised Tools e.g. baseline assessments, Boxall, SQA assessments
- Extra-Curricular / Wider Achievements e.g. participation in competitions, performances, or exhibitions, leadership roles or community involvement, awards, certificates, and achievements outside the classroom

Evidence should be varied, meaningful and linked to learning outcomes. It should demonstrate knowledge, skills, and attributes and allow pupils to reflect on their own progress.

It is the responsibility of teachers to gather evidence of pupils' learning and progress systematically, ensuring it is accurately recorded in accordance with the Classroom Jotter, Organisation and Display policy.

We welcome and encourage parents and families informing us of any other achievements our pupils have gained out with school so we can form a holistic picture of that pupil's progress.

When does assessment happen?

Baseline assessments

Teachers complete baseline assessments for every pupil in Health and Wellbeing (HWB), Literacy, and Numeracy to establish a clear starting point for learning. In addition, a Boxall assessment is carried out to provide a baseline of pupils' social and emotional development.

These baseline assessments:

- Enable the planning of teaching and learning that ensures progress at an appropriately challenging pace
- Provide ongoing evidence of pupils' performance and development over time, as assessments are updated throughout the academic session across the curriculum
- Support targeted interventions and personalised learning pathways to address individual needs

Boxall assessments are formally reviewed and evaluated twice a year, ensuring that social and emotional progress is monitored and used to inform future planning.

A baseline assessment of speech, language, and communication skills is carried out for each pupil on entry to ensure that individual needs are identified and supported from the start. This assessment provides a clear understanding of each pupils:

- Receptive language skills (understanding of vocabulary, instructions, and concepts)
- Expressive language skills (ability to communicate ideas, thoughts, and needs)
- Speech clarity and articulation
- Social communication skills (turn-taking, conversation, and interaction with peers and adults)

The results of the speech and language baseline assessment are used to:

- Inform targeted interventions and personalised learning plans
- Support classroom differentiation and teaching strategies
- Monitor progress over time through regular updates and reviews
- Facilitate collaboration with speech and language therapists, teachers, parents, and other professionals to ensure a coordinated approach

Baseline assessments are then updated twice yearly, in line with forward planning and evaluation arrangements.

Daily assessment

Assessment is an integral part of ongoing learning and teaching, conducted continuously, periodically and at key transition points. During day-to-day learning, pupils' progress, strengths and needs are monitored through a variety of methods.

Teachers and LWPs (Learning and Wellbeing Practitioners) gather evidence by:

- Observing and listening to pupils as they carry out tasks and activities
- Reviewing pupils' written work, creative outputs, or practical tasks
- Considering how pupils respond to questions and demonstrate understanding
- Taking photographs

Pupils are actively involved in the assessment process and in planning their next steps in learning. This collaborative approach encourages self-reflection, fosters ownership of learning, and ensures that teaching is responsive to individual needs.

Periodic Assessment

From time to time, teachers will formally assess pupils' progress and achievements to plan effectively, record outcomes and report on progress. These assessments ensure that pupils are making appropriate progress and enable timely interventions to support further learning.

Assessment at Key Transitions

Transitions are the significant stages in a pupil's educational journey, including:

- From home to SLC
- Between stages and Curriculum for Excellence levels
- From primary to secondary education
- From Broad General Education to the Senior Phase
- Onward to further or higher education, training, or employment

At these key points, sharing assessment information with parents, carers, and receiving colleagues is essential to support continuity and a positive learning experience.

Comprehensive information about a pupil's progress, achievements, and needs will be communicated to ensure that both their Broad General Education and Senior Phase learning continue seamlessly.

Reporting

Teachers and therapists will meet with parents, carers and relevant professionals at least twice yearly to review each pupil's Person-Centred Plan (PCP) and Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets.

The PCP is a holistic plan that puts the pupil at the centre of decision-making. It considers academic learning, overall wellbeing, personal goals, interests, strengths and support needs.

The IEP sets out specific, measurable targets for a pupil and breaks down larger educational aims into achievable steps.

During these meetings:

- The previous IEP is evaluated to assess progress against agreed targets

- Outcomes of the discussion inform the development of new targets for the updated IEP, ensuring the plan remains responsive to the pupil's needs
- The PCP is also evaluated and updated every 6 months.

IEPs will also be formally evaluated after three months, with an interim update shared with parents and professionals between more formal meetings to ensure timely support and adjustments where necessary.

This structured approach ensures that planning is continuous, progress is clearly communicated, and each pupil receives coordinated support to achieve their learning goals.

Forward Planning

Teachers are required to plan teaching and learning at the start of each term, ensuring that lessons are structured, differentiated and aligned with curriculum objectives, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Person-Centred Plans (PCPs).

At the end of each term, teachers will complete evaluations of planned activities, reflecting on the effectiveness of teaching strategies, pupil engagement and achievement of learning outcomes.

These evaluations will:

- Inform future planning for the following term
- Highlight areas of success and identify aspects requiring improvement
- Support the monitoring of progress for individual pupils and groups

This forward planning cycle ensures continuity, progression and a reflective approach to teaching and learning throughout the academic year.

Teachers are encouraged to use SLC's standard planning formats.

Feedback / Marking

Feedback is central to high-quality teaching and learning. We aim to provide timely, constructive and consistent feedback to all pupils to support their progress, develop self-reflection, and celebrate achievement.

Feedback is used to inform next steps, guide planning, and promote a culture of continuous improvement.

All teachers are expected to apply the agreed feedback strategies consistently across the school, ensuring that every pupil receives meaningful guidance individualised to their learning needs.

Marking of pupils' work is an essential part of the learning process. It provides pupils with clear, actionable information about their achievements and areas for improvement, supports next steps in learning and allows teachers to monitor progress effectively.

Marking should be consistent, timely and aligned with the feedback strategies outlined for each curricular area.

The following feedback and marking strategies must be used:

Subject Area	Feedback Strategies	Marking Approaches
English / Literacy	Written annotations, verbal feedback on reading/writing tasks, self- and peer-assessment, dialogue journals, success criteria checklists, digital feedback on writing	Written marking with next steps, verbal feedback in class, peer/self-marking with rubrics, formative quizzes
Expressive Arts (Art, Music, Drama, Dance)	Visual/verbal feedback on creative work, structured peer and group critiques, process-focused feedback, portfolio	Written/verbal feedback on performances/artwork, self-

	reviews, performance-based feedback during rehearsals or presentations	assessment/reflection journals
Health and Wellbeing	Reflective journals, scenario-based feedback, goal setting and review, observational feedback on teamwork and personal development, verbal guidance during role-play activities	Written/verbal feedback on reflections, self-assessment, peer assessment
Maths / Numeracy	Step-by-step worked feedback, error analysis, formative quizzes with targeted next steps, peer explanations, success criteria checklists linked to problem-solving skills	Written marking of exercises with corrections and next steps, verbal feedback, formative quizzes, self-marking of practice questions
Sciences	Lab/practical feedback on method and accuracy, written analysis feedback, guidance on hypothesis and conclusions, peer and self-assessment of experiments and presentations	Written marking of lab reports, verbal feedback during investigations, self-assessment using success criteria
Social Studies	Feedback on source analysis, essays, and projects (argument and evidence), verbal feedback in debates/discussions, research process guidance, peer/self-assessment of enquiry work	Written comments with next steps, verbal feedback, peer/self-assessment on presentations and reports
Technologies	Feedback on practical projects (design, innovation, application of skills), process diaries/logs, peer testing/review of	Written/verbal feedback on project outcomes, annotated design work, self-assessment against

	prototypes or digital solutions, annotated digital portfolios	design criteria
RME	Verbal feedback, reflective discussion, peer assessment	Written/verbal feedback on reflections and essays, self-assessment using success criteria
PE	Verbal feedback during skills practice, demonstration and modelling, peer observation and feedback, video analysis	Written/verbal feedback on performance and fitness logs, self-assessment using success criteria, peer-assessment during practical activities

Monitoring and Evaluation

SLC operates a robust and comprehensive *Monitoring and Evaluation Calendar* to ensure continuous improvement in teaching, learning, and outcomes. This includes:

- Teaching colleagues hold discussions with pupils during the tracking period to provide feedback on progress and identify next steps
- Colleagues participate in a regular programme of lesson observations, with feedback shared to support professional development
- Teaching colleagues engage with each other to moderate standards and share resources
- Peer observations
- Each teacher maintains their own plans, updated throughout termly to track progress and set improvement priorities
- Moderation takes place at whole-school levels to ensure consistency in teaching and assessment
- SQA results are analysed to identify areas for improvement
- Teachers complete HGIOS4 questionnaires, with responses collated and discussed to inform school improvement priorities

- Termly reviews with Principal Teacher, including feedback on forward planning and evaluations
- Professional Development Reviews to ensure teachers are aware of progress and professional development priorities
- Tracking tools
- Evaluations of professional learning activities inform planning for future sessions, ensuring continued relevance and impact
- Quality Assurance Calendar

Appendices available on request