

Learning & Teaching Policy

At Lochaber High School, we are dedicated to providing high-quality learning experiences for all our young people so that they can thrive academically and personally. We take pride in our expertise in subject areas and continually strive to create a nurturing and inclusive learning environment.

What is Learning?

We recognize that the process of learning encompasses various factors, including the crucial step of personally assimilating information and experiences. Sense is crafted by establishing connections between our existing knowledge and newly acquired information, forming a dynamic interplay between the familiar and the novel. Learning unfolds as a dual mechanism—both an active engagement and a reflective journey. Kirschner et al have posited that learning manifests as, "a change in long-term memory." Bruce Robertson of the Teaching Delusion takes this definition a little further, asserting that learning is the progressive development of long-term memory achieved through the gradual accumulation of knowledge.

Common Learning Strategies Found Across the Curriculum

Learning & teaching is always informed by current research in education. While no two lessons are identical, there are consistent features across departments that embody our commitment to effective learning and teaching. Some of these might include:

- Retrieval practice activities which give students a chance to review learning from previous lessons.
- Sharing learning intentions and success criteria with students.
- Interactive presentation of course content.
- Opportunities to make students think hard about their learning which will allow them to practise and improve their work.
- Pupils being given opportunities to engage with their learning in the form of self and peer-assessment and some elements of choice, where appropriate.
- Opportunities to receive feedback from their teacher about their strengths, next steps and how to achieve them.
- We appreciate every child is unique and, in every lesson, pupils will experience appropriate support and challenge. (This is often referred to as differentiation.)

Our staff actively participate in educational research, applying their findings in classroom settings to enhance their effectiveness in influencing young people's learning. This proactive approach often involves training sessions led by staff members after school or during in-service days, rooted in the latest educational research. Furthermore, at LHS, our staff engage in frequent classroom observations. This practice enables our teaching staff not only to witness diverse teaching and learning methodologies across various departments within

the school but also to receive constructive feedback on their own lessons. This deliberate and ongoing engagement serves as a catalyst for propelling continuous improvements in our educational practices.

Quality Assurance of Learning and Teaching

Ensuring the quality of learning and teaching at our school involves a multifaceted approach centred on regular professional dialogue among our teaching staff and fostering an ethos of continuous improvement. Engaging in constructive conversations about learning and teaching allows for the exchange of insights and best practices, ensuring that our teaching staff stay informed and responsive to evolving pedagogy. Additionally, we prioritize feedback from those at the centre of learning and teaching – our young people. This feedback is systematically collected through pupil surveys and focus groups across the school and at department level, providing invaluable perspectives on their learning experiences. Members of the Senior Leadership Team conduct learning walks, immersing themselves in the daily dynamics of classrooms, and offering an additional layer of insight. Furthermore, we sample parental reports to gauge the formative content of our reports so parents know their child's strengths, areas of development and what steps our young people need to undertake to improve their learning. This comprehensive approach to quality assurance underscores our commitment to fostering an enriching educational environment that continually adapts to the evolving needs of our learners.

Digital Learning

Teachers use a wide range of techniques to inspire, engage and support children and young people in their learning. These techniques include the use of technology and collaborative online tools. If these are used appropriately, digital technology can function as a powerful, flexible, and engaging tool for teachers that can enhance what they already do so well; teach our young people.

How Does Digital Technology Enhance Learning & Teaching?

- Access to a multitude of additional online educational content as well as being able to create new digital content that can support education.
- A range of digital tools and services (apps, games, websites, etc.) allow educators to offer a number of approaches to learning and learners can choose the approach that best suits them.
- Live video streaming and digital tools and services allow the potential for learners to study subjects via online distance learning.
- Educators have access to a range of engaging digital tools and services.
- Educators can reduce workload by using appropriate digital assessments that provide instant results and personalised feedback. This frees time for focusing on next steps and improvement.

- Teachers can provide learners with access to a range of digital resources which allow 'anytime/anywhere learning' and build a level of digital skills which will be vital in today's digital world.
- Online digital networks allow teachers to share resources and digital tools and services expedite lesson planning. Digital assessment eliminates marking time. The time saved can be devoted to quality learning and teaching.
- Educators can offer learners the opportunity to collaborate online with others from across the world in addition to their peers within their school or early years setting.

Glencoe House

Pupils with severe and complex needs may spend most of their time at Lochaber High School in Glencoe House. Staff in Glencoe House provide a bespoke learning environment that allows pupils to thrive and work towards achieving qualifications in a number of subjects.

Homework

Homework is a part of secondary school. Pupils are regularly given homework to support their learning and to encourage them to become more organised and promote independence in their learning. The tasks that are set as homework may include written, oral, or practical activities and will be designed by the teacher to be worthwhile and challenging. This provides an opportunity for students to practise and consolidate what has been learned in class. Many primary schools no longer issue homework as it has been shown to have little or no impact on a child's progress but this is not the same in a secondary setting. The evidence shows that the impact of homework, on average, is five months' additional progress.

Lesson Evaluation Toolkit	
Structural Features	
Elements	Illustrations
Retrieval Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low-stakes assessment, promoting recall from everyone. ● Includes material required for the lesson, recent and less recent material.
Learning Intentions & Success Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set out precise learning goals (Know, Understand, Be able to...) ● Clear communication of what you are looking for/what success looks like, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "I can" statements ○ Key features ○ Exemplars ● Used to support feedback and student self-evaluation.
Presentation of content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear presentation, including explanations and visuals which stimulate interest. ● Interactive - includes frequent checks for understanding. ● Repeating and summarising key points.
Use of Resources	Effective use of resources E.g., textbooks, kit/equipment, chromebooks.
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Making students think and using strategies to check for understanding such as questioning, discussion, active assessment activities such as think, pair, share and use of show-me boards. ● Guided, supported, independent. ● Co-operative learning opportunities. ● Overlearning - lots of opportunities to master content. ● Teacher circulating class.
Plenary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revisits the learning intentions and success criteria. ● Gathers further evidence about what was learned, was difficult or not learned (e.g., via Exit Tickets) ● Summarises next steps.
Notes:	

Key Principles	
Elements	Illustrations
Challenge & Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Availability and use of support resources, e.g.: ● Knowledge organisers ● Checklists and scaffolds ● Peer teaching ● Choices within activities, with differing levels of challenge. ● Balance of familiar and less familiar content.
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear and precise ● Recognises what next steps are and how to achieve them. ● Links to success criteria ● Individual and whole class messages ● Time available for students to take on board feedback and improve (maybe via homework).
Learning Environment	
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Knowing students well ● Positive and professional interactions ● Recognition of positives, particularly effort.
High Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High expectations of effort, behaviour, and quality of work. ● Target/goal setting (e.g., personal bests) ● Encouragement
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Calm, ordered, under control. ● Effective use of time, space, and resources ● Appropriate pace
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students are on task, engaged, interested, and motivated. ● Poor student behaviours are dealt with promptly and in as low-level a way as possible.

Strengths:	Focus (for development):

