

Clounagh Junior High School



CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY

Date Ratified by Board of Governors:

March 2024

Date for Review:

March 2026

Overview:

This is an overview of the content of the subjects pupils study in Clounagh Junior High School mainstream, and the assessment procedures used to reinforce and consolidate classroom teaching.

At the start of the year, pupils are given a timetable, with different teachers for most subjects. The school week is divided into 60 periods, 12 periods per day, each lasting 30 minutes. Where appropriate, pupils are timetabled for double periods in their practical subjects.

Pupils are taught in Form Class groups for all subjects, except for the practical subjects for which they are divided into smaller groups to take account of the practical nature of the subjects.

Pupils are taught the Northern Ireland Curriculum and are given every encouragement to achieve the highest personal academic standards through challenging and engaging lessons.

Subject / Periods

Teaching and Learning:

A variety of strategies employed in the classroom provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to develop and display their creativity, independence, collaboration and encourage acquisition of the necessary skills for effective learning.

Assessment is an integral part of the school curriculum. Teachers assess pupils' progress both in an on-going way, referred to as Assessment for Learning, as well as in a summative way, which is Assessment of Learning.

Parents are invited to meet with subject teachers once a year via School cloud. A letter with information about booking appointments is shared via email a few weeks prior to the Parent-Teacher Meetings and parents will be able to make appointments to speak with either subject teachers or Form Class Teachers. However, parents are encouraged to contact the pupil's Form Class Teacher, at any time, should they have concerns about their son/daughter's progress.

Baseline Testing (CAT 4, PASS, PTE, PTM):

At the beginning of the Autumn Term, all pupils in Year 8 complete a battery of nationally standardised tests, produced by GL Assessment. These include an aptitude test and an attitudinal test and the outcomes help staff to set individual targets and monitor pupil performance. These tests will be followed up at the end of year 9 and 10.

Assessment for Learning:

Assessment for Learning is very much integrated into pupils' everyday learning. It is part of the teaching process used to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers use techniques that best suit the nature of the work being assessed and the purpose of the assessment. It may, for example, take the form of small class quizzes or unit tests, homework tasks, independent or group tasks, class discussion or teacher observation of pupil participation as an individual or as part of a group.

Assessment of Learning / School Examinations:

Pupils sit School Examinations in November / December and again at the end of May when they are off timetable for a week. Copies of the school examination timetable indicating changes to the normal timetable are shared via email and provided to pupils a few weeks before the start of the examinations.

Preparing for school examinations:

There are a number of ways in which parents can support school and help pupils prepare for school examinations. In lessons, subject teachers indicate areas on which pupils should focus revision, spend time preparing them for the content, sharing with them the types of questions they might be asked and giving guidance about how to set out answers and the timing of answers. Form Class teachers will also spend time discussing ways to revise and assisting pupils with the preparation of a revision timetable. Pupils should try to revise in an on-going way throughout the year and testing of knowledge is an essential part of any such revision.

Parents can also assist with revision in some of the following ways:

- Taking a pupil through their revision timetable and planning what needs to be revised in each subject to ensure all subjects and areas highlighted by subject teachers are covered;
- Assisting with the organisation of notes/books required for revision;
- Creating a revision notebook in which the pupil can make notes, self-test and highlight areas for further revision;
- Talking the pupil through learning, hearing vocabulary/prepared presentations for Speaking Tests in Languages and checking accuracy of notes made from textbooks/learning booklets/class and homeworks;
- Ensuring pupils can work at a table/desk and have a quiet area in which to study
- Removing mobile phones to minimise distraction while working!

We value the establishment of good study habits so that pupils can take increasing responsibility for their work at their next schools.

Homework:

Homework given will vary to reflect subject content and pupil contact time allocated each week. Although pupils get homework according to the timetable, there will be times when homework may not arise naturally from class activities, and it may not be useful to set a piece of work. There will be occasions, too, when pupils are involved in project work and will be required to complete a short additional task in the evening to ensure on-going progress in the project. Pupils may also be set a larger piece of work which teachers might ask pupils to complete over two or more homework sessions. This will require careful organisation on the part of the pupil who will need to learn to manage his or her time at home to ensure they are able to complete all homework on time.

Home Support:

Parents can support their son or daughter's learning at home by encouraging pupils to:

- Check homework for accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation and presentation;
- Take time each week to revise work, possibly even setting a few weekly targets for improvement;
- Manage and organise their books and materials required for lessons each evening;

- Read as much and as often as possible including books, newspapers or journals related to personal interests and subject related articles on the Internet; all useful ways to extend general knowledge and literacy skills;
- Participate in extracurricular activities

Skills:

The skill of Effective Communication is at the core of all learning and is developed in a progressive way through Reading, Writing, Talking and Listening in English lessons and reinforced across all subjects.

Pupils are encouraged to take care with their Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation and to take time to look over their work to ensure it is at all times neat, with legible handwriting and in line with each subject teacher's expectations.

Similarly, pupils' ability in Using Mathematics, taught primarily through Mathematics, is developed and consolidated across the curriculum.

Clounagh JHS has a well-structured programme to ensure pupils consolidate their existing ICT skills. In addition to teaching ICT as a discrete subject on the curriculum, pupils' skills in Using ICT are developed throughout a range of subjects across the curriculum in Key Stage 3.

The Northern Ireland Curriculum has identified the development of Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities as central to enabling pupils to become effective learners across all subjects. These skills encourage pupils' ability to think both critically and creatively and to develop personal and interpersonal skills and dispositions which help them in their learning.

The five skills are:

- Managing Information
- Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making
- Being Creative
- Working with Others
- Self Management

Pupils acquire all five skills through all subjects but focus on the development of the skills that are most appropriate to the content of each subject.

Reporting:

Parents receive a report of their son/daughter's performance at the end of Term 1 and Term 3. Both reports will show conduct and effort grades. One report each year will also include comments which may include a focus for improvement from subject teachers and pastoral comments from the Form Teacher.

The timing of these reports is indicated below:

Winter Report

Year 8: December

Year 9: December

Year 10: January (Transfer 1 Report)

Year 10: April / May (Transfer 2 Report)

Summer Report

Year 8: June

Year 9: June

Year 8 Specific information

Movement between classes / bands:

Our aim is to ensure as far as possible that all pupils at Clounagh JHS access the same Curriculum and Assessment as their peers. Staff teach the same content to all classes, except the nurturing group, 'C'.

As a result, class moves in year 8 are minimal as we want to develop the pupils' social skills and allow them time to experience new subjects.

Due to the nature of selection in the Dickson Plan, Year 9 and 10 whole school Assessment is crucial to this process of transfer to KS4. It is therefore important that the pupils follow the same Curriculum in each subject area unless they have been placed in the nurturing class.

Class change is very disruptive to pupil progress, both pastorally and academically and therefore both areas are taken into account when deciding on the best way forward.

Pupils may be moved between classes (within their current band) for pastoral reasons which clearly impact seriously on the wellbeing of the pupil, for example, if there are friendship issues after consultation with the pupil, parents and staff involved. (Government regulations on class size for practical subjects may mean there are no places available).

In circumstances where the Assessment data suggests the pupil had been significantly misplaced in Term 1 Year 8 and / or has been unable to access the curriculum effectively in their current class, SMT will discuss the option of a change of class with the parents and pupil.

Transfer Information:

In light of the procedure for transfer to another school in Year 11, parents will be provided with a separate letter indicating your child’s overall Rank Order position within the school. This will help you understand whether your child is likely to be suited to transfer to an academic Grammar School like Portadown College to sit 10 or more GCSE subjects, or to move to a Senior High School like Craigavon Senior High to sit 8 or less GCSE subjects. Portadown College take between 80 and 90 pupils from Clounagh JHS.

Only the following subjects contribute to the final rank order for transfer:

English	French	Geography	HE
History	Maths	Spanish	Technology
Science (Biology/Chemistry/Physics)			

***Spanish, Biology/Chemistry & Physics are completed by ‘I’ band pupils only.**

****Art, Music and PE are assessed and reported through grades A- D for Achievement and Participation**

*****It is essential that pupils and parents are aware that results from any set of school examinations could potentially be used by teachers to support applications for transfer to another school. This information will be shared with parents and pupils through emails and at meetings.**

Portadown College will usually select pupils based on the results from the two sets of transfer exams which are held in year 10. The results will normally be split 50% Transfer 1 and 50% Transfer 2.

The online application portal for transfer to key stage 4 opens in March/April each year and parents will be made aware of the criteria for admission to the Senior High Schools online before this date.