

St. Benedict's College

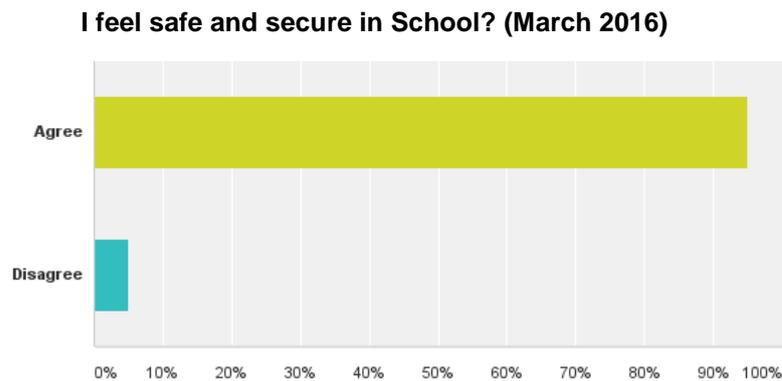


LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

Introduction

At St. Benedict's College we acknowledge that the quality of our teaching directly affects how well the pupils at our college learn. We also understand that we have to use a variety of teaching methods to educate the pupils in our care.

As all of our pupils have the right to an education that builds on their strengths, takes account of their needs in order that they achieve to their full potential in all areas of development. To this end St. Benedict's College Leadership Team will support staff in the delivery and continuing development of a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. St. Benedict's College will provide an environment that is free from harassment, promotes good order and classroom discipline in order to meet every child's educational need. 95% of pupils surveyed felt that they felt safe and secure in the school environment.



Learning “is the acquisition and retention of new knowledge, skills or understanding.”

Teaching is “the art of imparting knowledge, skills or understanding.”

Both are inextricably linked.

“..... improvement comes first and foremost through high quality teaching from committed and professional teachers whose skills and competence are recognised and respected and their professional development supported” (Every School A Good School, April 2009).

Key Principles

- the promotion of a relevant curriculum based on the key principles of the Northern Ireland Curriculum
- the creation of a caring but disciplined environment where **all** are treated with equality and fairness
- laying the foundations of a life-time of learning through providing pupils with enjoyable learning experiences which are matched to their needs, abilities and aptitudes
- the encouragement of pupils to become independent learners using suitable teaching strategies
- the promotion of a range of appropriate teaching strategies which will facilitate maximum learner involvement
- the identification and provision of appropriate staff development

- using available data to analyse and plan and inform educational pathways and to tackle underperformance
- working within the Antrim Learning Community and more recently, the Ballymena Learning Community in the dissemination of good practice.

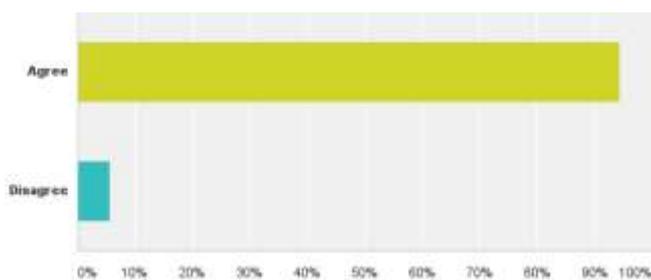
Learning and The Learner’s Role

“...the interests of pupils rather than institutions must be at the centre of efforts to improve educational achievement and tackle underachievement” (Every School A Good School, April 2009).

In St. Benedict’s College we believe that all children can learn:

- every child will have access to a wide range of learning activities which will meet all of their needs, interests, abilities and aptitudes and provide equality of opportunity
- every child will work in an attractive, well-resourced, supportive and safe learning environment where all are encouraged to reach their full potential in all aspects of their personal and academic development
- every child will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, both in the classroom and at home, including setting personal goals and targets to sustain self-improvement within a self-evaluating culture

- **94% Of my teacher promotes independent learning? (March 2016)**



- every child will be encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle enhancing opportunities for learning and development.

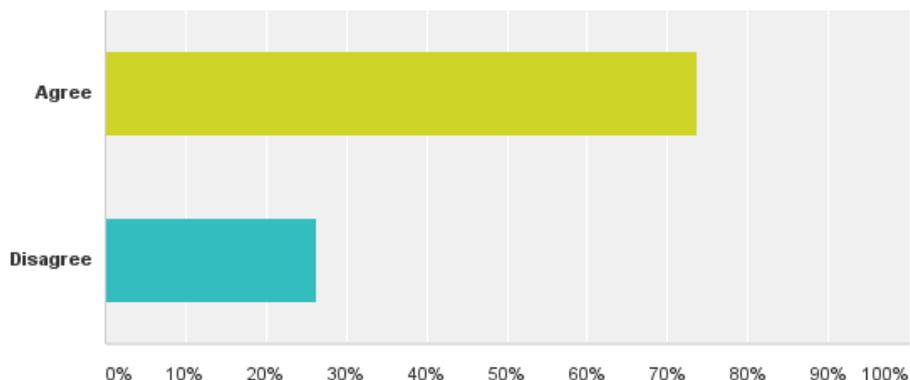
Learning Environments

In St. Benedict’s College we believe that we should have a Learning Environment whereby:

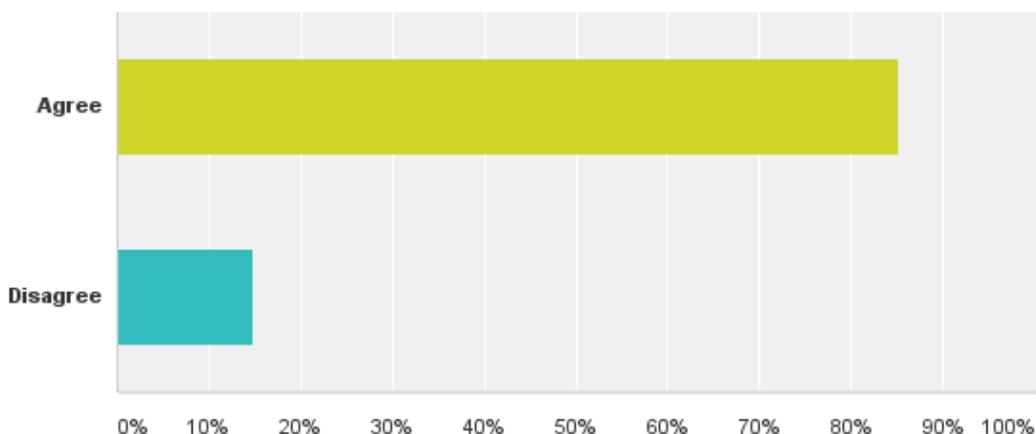
- it is stimulating, colourful, comfortable, well-resourced and flexible
- the atmosphere in the school is orderly and purposeful

- the pupils feel free and comfortable to voice an opinion, to take responsibility for their own work, to feel valued and are encouraged to do their best 84% said there is a good balance between teacher voice and pupil voice? (**March Survey 2016**)
- the pupils know that their teachers have realistic expectations of what they can achieve
- 87% pupils felt there is an effective system of **rewards** and sanctions (**March Survey 2016**)
- the school presents itself as a learning organisation.

There is a good reward system in my school? (March 2016)



I think getting rewards for good classwork, homework, behaviour and attendance also makes me try harder in school? (March 2016) 74% think that rewards make pupils try harder.

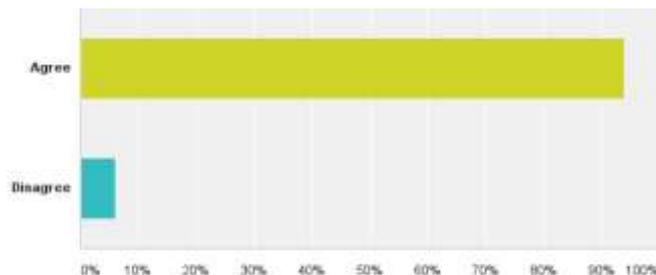


Assessment

Assessment and other data is used effectively to inform teaching and learning across the school and in the classroom and to promote improvement:

- teachers encourage pupils to set realistic targets for improvement and they are supported by the academic and pastoral provision in the school to become more independent learners.
- Tracking is linked to CMs carried out in each department for KS3

94% Of my teachers encourage me to meet high expectations for a task? (March 2016)



- target-setting and self-assessment opportunities are encouraged to meet the pupils' learning needs
- all assessment will be in accordance with the school's Assessment and Reporting Policy
- pupils will be provided with opportunities for peer assessment and self-evaluation in line with A.F.L. requirements for the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

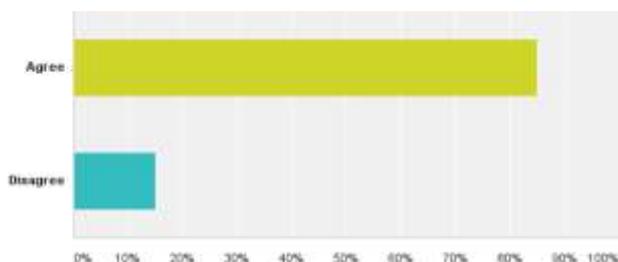
Teaching and The Teacher's Role

“The talents and expertise of the best teachers will be used more effectively with greater opportunity for benchmarking and learning from best practice within individual schools and between schools”
(Every School A Good School, April 2009).

In St. Benedict's College our teachers believe that all children can learn and can experience success:

- teachers are committed and enthusiastic professionals, dedicated to improving learning
- all teachers are supported in keeping up-to-date with current educational developments and initiatives in line with current thinking from the Northern Ireland Curriculum
- teachers reflect on their own work and the outcomes of individual pupils
- teachers use adaptable and flexible teaching strategies which match the identified educational and diverse needs of our pupils
- teachers enjoy a positive relationship with their pupils and with other school based staff
- teachers work hard to create a positive, stimulating learning environment which promotes mutual respect and allows/ encourages the individual child to experience success.

The College has a caring ethos and is committed to the welfare of pupils and staff? (March 2016)



Indicators

In St. Benedict's College we ensure that:

- the curriculum is well-structured to reflect the Northern Ireland Curriculum so that pupil learning is consistent and progressive ensuring that all children can follow an educational pathway which is appropriate for them
- teachers engage in long term, medium and short term planning using a variety of strategies for classroom learning for example, differentiation, investigation and research, open-ended tasking, problem-solving and effective questioning approaches
- effective support is in place to meet the additional needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to education
- teachers use Learning Intentions and Success Criteria at the beginning and the end of the lesson respectively. Teachers will ensure that pupils know which T.S. is being employed in the lesson
- the School Development Plan takes account of the needs of the children with an emphasis upon numeracy, literacy and I.C.T. across the curriculum
- teachers engage in monitoring and evaluating pupil learning using Tracking, PASS PTE, PTM data
- teachers act as facilitators in the learning process, actively encouraging independent learning
- teachers use a variety of resources
- teachers are competent in and make use of I.C.T. as a tool for learning and teaching
- teachers are kept informed of children with special educational needs and those for whom English is not a first language
- teachers access IEBPs to assist in the learning process
- teachers will look for ways of supporting each other, ensuring that effective support is given at induction, early professional development and in continuing professional development
- the pupils' democratic voice will be represented at Student Council.

The Role of Parents

In St. Benedict's College, we value the strong partnership between home and school as we work together to provide quality Catholic education for all our pupils; to this end;

- parents will be informed of developments in the curriculum as they unfold
- regular feedback will be given to parents on their children's progress
- parents will be asked to sign the Homework Planner on a weekly basis

- parents will be encouraged to ensure their child's good attendance at school and to develop communication links with appropriate personnel regarding their child's progress.

92% of Parents find teachers' comments in the Homework Diary with regards behaviour and progress helpful? (March 2016)

Staff Development

Staff development is concerned with supporting and developing the professionalism of teachers to enable them to deliver good quality education.

In St. Benedict's College:

- all members of staff are encouraged to keep up-to-date with current educational developments
- there is a culture of shared good practice
- teachers are encouraged to develop leadership and management skills through the delivery of in-service training to colleagues
- teachers are given opportunities to attend relevant external courses in the context of identified priorities in the school development plan
- teachers are encouraged to disseminate that shared good practice from the above
- teachers are encouraged to use peer observation for the purpose of promoting discussion and reflection on teaching and learning and to create an atmosphere of mutual trust.

Monitoring and Review

In St. Benedict's College:

- the Senior Leadership Team, (Curriculum A.P.), Subject Leaders, Pastoral Leaders and Co-ordinators employ a range of methods in a systematic and rigorous process of monitoring, evaluating and reviewing all practices in the school
- there is a clear focus on learning and teaching
- examination results are analysed and used to set targets and to inform good practice
- peer observation at departmental level is encouraged as a tool for improvement
- Tracking and PASS is employed as a tool for Monitoring and Evaluation at departmental level and at senior level.

87% have you used Tracking and PASS to inform your form class of their progress? (March 2016)

