

Goytre Fawr Primary School Blended Policy & Approaches.

Introduction

Blended learning is an approach that provides innovative educational solutions through an effective mix of traditional classroom teaching together with mobile learning and online activities for teachers, trainers and students. The concept is rooted in the idea that learning is not just a one-time event but a continuous process. Blending learning provides various benefits over using one single delivery system. Blended Learning is an education approach in which a student learns at least in part through delivery of content and instruction via digital and online media, with some element of student control over time, place, path or pace.

Context

The recent global pandemic and resultant closure of schools threw up many issues that Goytre dealt with well. We managed our own and the lease to buy ICT stock that we had well and managed to ensure our existing Hwb use was extended, so that all learners were supported by us to continue their basic learning. Within two weeks, our staff had framed a blended learning offer that was available to all students with equity and wellbeing firmly at the core of what we provided.

On June 3, the Welsh Government (WG) announced that there would be a phased opening of schools from the 29th June 2020 to provide all pupils with the opportunity to 'Check in, Catch up and Prepare.' Their guidance gave a range of different approaches as to how schools should re-evaluate learning for the near future.

This pandemic has amplified the question of what kind of learning is required in 2020 and beyond. During the time of school closure, it has become clear that we are no longer working on a 'stop gap' solution with a medium-to-longer term perspective until such time as treatment, vaccines and large scale testing are available to all. The future delivery of education in both a physical and online settings is now both essential and recognised as part of our ongoing educational provision to all learners. We now recognise that now is the time to move beyond a blend of traditional teaching and online instruction, both happening within brick and mortar, to something more.

Access to online learning and to independent learning using technology that is transferable between classroom and home, can facilitate the acquisition of essential 21st Century competencies for our learners, such as collaboration, communication, independent research and higher order cognitive skills.

Aims:

- Promote learner and staff well-being as a key priority.
- Focus on ensuring learners are 'learning fit' at all times and in all circumstances.
- Provide individual support based on progression and next steps, before attainment and catch up.
- Plan intervention programmes targeted to provide support for learners to reduce and minimise the educational gap.
- Plan a blended approach to include in-school working and distance learning driven by a single curriculum, i.e the two elements need to be mutually supportive rather than work in parallel.

- Ensure all approaches will be based around the Four Purposes.
- Enable teacher collaboration to provide a holistic curriculum with broad and varied experiences, utilising digital skills.
- Ensure our approach to blended learning will include elements of 'live streaming'. Face to face learning will be further reinforced and enriched through distance learning.
- To continue distance learning through the use of Hwb, Google Classroom, Class Dojo, J2E and Flipgrid; enabling staff to stay in touch with parents and carers.
- Maintain regular and effective communication with parents & carers and governors to ensure expectations are clear to school partners.

What do we want for our learners?

- A sense of safety.
- A sense of calmness and kindness.
- A sense of community with their peers and staff.
- A sense of their own value and importance.
- A sense of our high aspirations for them.
- A sense of our belief in them.
- A sense of our expectation of achievement for them.
- A sense of mutual respect.
- A sense of confidence in themselves.
- A context for learning that makes them feel comfortable, independent and empowered.

Planning for Blended Learning

Before serious planning of blended learning can take place, it is necessary to take stock of what we have learnt from the first phase of the pandemic, when we were in lockdown. A reflective process is needed, to identify strengths, and student needs, which will allow GFPS as a school, to plan effectively for our learners and to respond to the inevitable vagaries of the continuing pandemic over the next eighteen months to two years.

Staff will be encouraged to consider the following questions when applied to subjects or AOLE's:

1. How did we do? How successful were we in creating distance learning? What were our strengths? What are our areas for development?
2. What did we learn about the students? Resilience, independence etc.
3. Who has learned well during the distance-learning phase? Why?
4. Who struggled most? Why?

5. What learning gaps exist?
6. What skills most enables students during the distance-learning phase?
7. What skills most enabled teachers?
8. How did technology help/hinder?
9. What were the bright spots?
10. What elements can we continue to utilise?
11. What areas of previous practice have we not missed? What made little or no difference when it was removed?

The findings from the Educations Endowment Foundation's Rapid Evidence assessment concludes that in planning for a blended curriculum the following five points should be considered:

- I. Teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered
- II. Ensuring access to technology is key, particularly for disadvantaged students
- III. Peer interactions can provide motivation to improve learning outcomes
- IV. Supporting students to work independently can improve learning outcomes
- V. Different approaches to remote learning suit different types of content and students

This mirrors our own anecdotal experiences throughout lockdown and our own observation on our school's recent responses.

Recovery curriculum

Students returning to school are not able to pick up where they left off and so teachers need to work with students to identify the skills deficits that have been created due to school closure. Summative testing is not the best way to do this, though, although it can play a part in establishing benchmarks and revised starting points.

Many learners may have learning gaps and others will have emerging stressors that will affect their ability to engage cognitively. Still others may have grown in ways we could not have foreseen. Assessment practices that prioritise emotional wellbeing is what is required during school re-opening, with staff guided towards these recommendations:

- ✓ Be cautious of using diagnostic quizzes and high stakes evaluation that will heighten the stress for some learners and therefore will not provide meaningful or accurate direction for the teacher.
- ✓ Consider formative, low-threat assessments for learning to reveal students' strengths and needs
- ✓ Facilitate interviews that invite student and family perspectives. These richer strategies will engage students' voices positively and uncover unanticipated insights.

Also consider that students have enjoyed a great deal of autonomy during school closure, for some this has been a liberating experience and one that has helped them to engage with learning on their terms. This autonomy needs to be in-built into the tasks / activities that we design as part of the recovery curriculum.

Blended Learning Approaches

WG have stated that the blended curriculum should be a *'single and seamless curriculum approach, where practitioners can develop a more integrated approach to learning and learners can build connections across learning as per the principles of the curriculum for Wales. Schools are instructed to use aspects of the new curriculum guidance to support them in developing a blended learning approach.'*

At GFPS we will:

- Use the Four Purposes as the basis to support and plan learning activities
- Focus on continuing to develop LLC (including Welsh)/literacy, MD/numeracy, digital competency/ICT, PE and Wellbeing.
- Consider key pedagogies that will support subject and curriculum development, building on the 12 pedagogical principles of the Curriculum for Wales.
- Apply our 'Vehicles' approach to delivering identified elements of the CfW and amend our procedures therein in recognition of the imminent and likely repercussions of the global pandemic e.g. tailor showcase events so that they have a remote element planned.

Blended Learning Approach and our contingencies for learning can be summarised as follows:

Time in school, should any contact group have only limited school access or reduced times on site, should be used to support the activities that learners can complete at home at their own pace. This includes guided investigations and extended opportunities to apply new skills, knowledge and concepts. In a flipped learning approach, planning could include opportunities for learners to research prepare and think before contact time with teachers in school to explore and consolidate.

Current practice is basically back to a semblance of normality (swimming, SPLD and peripatetic teaching aside), but in case of any pandemic-related adjustments or any contact bubble being asked to stand down and self-isolate, even partially, we will implement the following measures:

1. Groups A, B, C, D explicitly established and shared with home. Siblings, friendship groups and ability groups discussed and considered. No leeway on adjusting after they have been set. We (empathetically) decide and inform home. No negotiation around friendship groups etc. is possible, neither is changing them, mid-term. We will try to keep the groups that have been previously set, as far as possible.
2. X5 English lessons issued on Hwb, through Google Classroom each week, with videoed guidance alongside to introduce topics or themes, at least once a week.
3. X5 Maths lessons on on Hwb, through Google Classroom each week, with videoed guidance alongside to introduce topics or themes, at least once a week.
4. Reading (online) provision. We have bug club online facilities available for all ages and stages.
5. X1 Contact live streaming, teacher-led lesson a week through TEAMS (alongside safeguarding TA and in groups of x9 maximum) to promote allow for reflection of last week's learning and to promote a flipped learning approach to the week ahead. There should be

specific time and encouragement of collaborative discussion and learning amongst the groups.

6. Recorded, asynchronous lessons/materials that staff prepare, are also acceptable formats that allow for easier access for our pupils. As outlined in points 2. & 3. , we encourage our teachers to produce at least one asynchronous session a week for literacy and maths, alongside the reflective session on Teams (synchronous learning) which allow for learner feedback and feed forward.
7. Homework is to be completed as far as possible on Hwb, whatever stage of opening the school is in. But the following tools are to be outlined as the ones we are utilising with home and children, where we will communicate and learn together:
 - Google Classroom
 - TEAMS
 - J2E
 - Dojo
 - Flipgrid
7. Staff communication to each other will be held through regular (mostly weekly) Business, Staff, Professional Learning and SLT meetings, held via TEAMS and with notes and minutes in relevant files (on Hwb One Drive) to accompany. Staff have responsibility (with our support) to make sure their home internet allows for access to Hwb and that they can take part in further remote learning practices. Staff are asked to please make sure their internet is functional and that they have a device that can access TEAMS (the app is easy to download on to any tablet or smart phone or is available through the internet on any laptop or PC) and Hwb (anything device with access to internet can access Hwb).
8. We also need to continue with our work in identifying and connecting with the families of blended/distance learning non-engagers. SLT and class teachers will work together to identify and contact weekly, those we have identified as “vulnerable”. Our own exhaustive criteria, previously used in lockdown, will continue to be used and our lists updated regularly. Parents and children will need to be made aware that our expectations around the completion of work and curriculum engagement have had to change. We will work alongside all agencies to reach out and support our families, but the onus will be on them to support the learning we set, as far as they possibly can.
9. Devices and access to ICT-we commit to using our existing stock of ICT resources, and to auditing ongoing need; to plugging gaps where there is need, especially in our vulnerable homes. We will work alongside all agencies and our ICT providers to ensure that all of our school community can access their work. Our intention is that we have access in all the homes of our learners.
10. Use of textbooks and other physical resources to work at home can only be attempted when no infection risk is posed and ease of distribution has been considered.
11. Staff have responsibility for ensuring that they are aware of all of the children in their class who have access to leased Chromebooks and those who might need to once again borrow some

school stock. In the event of partial lockdown of cohorts/bubbles, we will need to ensure that all homes have access and that we have the correct information.

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To facilitate the online aspect of students work, face-to-face contact classroom time should also be used to ensure that students have a clear understanding of:

- How to efficiently log in to Hwb and other sites they will need access to.
- How to access learning material on Google Classroom.
- How to use the most appropriate online tools to complete any tasks set.
- How to submit work to their teacher.
- How to access and respond to feedback provided by their teacher.

Providing Feedback to students

School assessment should be done verbally wherever possible in the classroom.

Written feedback in the case of further lock down scenarios can be completed via Google Classrooms and should be diagnostic feedback that moves learning forward.

Teachers are permitted to take in books from students for marking, making every attempt to remain safe and implement sensible practices that limit the possibility of any virus transmission.

Where a teacher chooses to, feedback could be provided online with the use of Google classroom in Hwb. Immediate classroom based marking is our aspiration in our core subjects, especially.

Within the context of blended learning feedback should:

- Focus on the formative element so that learners are supported to move forward in an unfamiliar context
- Focus on helping to identify the next steps and building confidence both to enable them to be ready to learn and to make progress in their learning.
- Not be about testing learners at this stage. EAS guidance states that it is not appropriate at this time for schools to use *summative* assessments for the tracking of individual progress against targets.

The purpose of feedback within the context of blended learning:

- Keep in touch during the 'home' element of blended learning and maintain positivity.
- Acknowledge and appreciate learners' efforts, to celebrate their work and offer encouragement for them to do their best.
- Support the learners to ensure that they understand the tasks and respond to any misconceptions or misunderstandings that they may have.
- Provide the teacher with as much information and possible of the learners' current knowledge and understanding and the ways that they can be supported in the next steps of their learning; and
- Help parents to support their children's learning

The nature of the feedback and instructions for tasks given:

- Clearly present and explain the nature of the tasks set giving clear expectations;
- Communicate clearly, simply and concisely when providing individual or whole group verbal or written feedback;
- Correct common misconceptions and misunderstandings; and
- Provide learners with opportunities to keep in touch and communicate with their peers, and to see and celebrate each other’s work so that they can learn from one another.

Blended learning allows us to continue educating our children, even when circumstances dictate that they must stay at home. ***It is the class teacher’s responsibility to ensure that any pupil who is self-isolating within a household (but who has no symptoms themselves) has work that they can access digitally that reduces the chance of them falling behind in their core subjects whilst they are observing an enforced period of isolation.***

A learner who is at home with Covid-19 symptoms is not expected to have work set or to complete work during their time of illness.

Our approaches worked well during lockdown. We must be flexible and determined to provide a balanced education to all of our learners, whatever circumstances throw at us. We must be prepared in knowing how to give learners an opportunity to maintain basic standards whatever the circumstances. We must also clearly communicate with home to ensure that they are aware of how to access and submit their child’s learning and we are committed to ensuring that they have the necessary technical support, wherever possible, to achieve this.

School Closed ←		→ School Open		
School Closed to All Children	School Closed to Most Children	School Partially Open	School Fully open with Protective Measures in Place	School Fully open
Distance Learning is undertaken by all children.	Nearly all children undertake distance learning. The school is open for vulnerable learners	The school is open to children at certain times and days due to strict social distancing expectations. Children have a blend of in school and distance learning	All children are in school, however they are in contact groups (classes) & protective measures are in place	The risk level is negligible and no social distancing required

Our guide to help staff preparedness for circumstances around distance and blended learning.

Professional Learning

During this challenging time, it is important that all staff are supported through professional learning. The blended learning approach may mean that the focus for professional learning will change.

Professional Learning is the right of the professionals at Goytre Fawr and should:

- Be tailored to both whole school and individual needs: for example, though auditing staff digital skills and online pedagogical skills to identify areas for development.

- Develop teachers’ pedagogical knowledge to support the blended approach and encourage them, as the expert, to make decisions about how to plan and balance direct teaching with online activities to develop pupils’ knowledge, skills and understanding effectively.
- Develop teachers’ knowledge of meta-cognition to support them to plan opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills. Including self-motivation, self-questioning and their ability to develop and express their thoughts.
- Establish what effective blended learning looks like and support staff to know how face-to – face and distance teaching and learning work together to support pupil progress and achievement.
- Encourage collaboration and plan time for staff to work together to develop and evaluate effective blended learning for pupils.
- Develop and share principles, for example, online synchronous and safe engagement with pupils online.
- Where appropriate, be informed by research.

Signature of Headteacher  Date: 23.9.20
Mr Mike. Gough

Signature of Chair of GovernorsDate: 23.9.20
Mrs Kathryn Edwards.