



St Mary's Catholic School

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY



January 2016

MISSION STATEMENT

Faith is the heartbeat of our school, as we walk with Jesus through life. St Mary's provides a safe, happy, positive place to learn, where everyone is encouraged to reach their full potential. By showing respect, love and care to each other, without exception, everyone is valued in our school family.

1. Philosophy

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we believe that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for all. We seek to establish our school as an excellent centre of learning for both pupils and staff; where we can all learn new and exciting things in a Christian atmosphere of love and care; where self-esteem, self-confidence, self-respect and positive relationships are fostered.

We firmly believe in the concept of life-long learning and that we share the responsibility for nurturing all our children's spiritual, moral, academic, social and physical development as well as their mental well-being, enabling them in the future to make informed decisions in their lives and become responsible citizens of the future.

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we provide a rich and varied learning environment using stimulating and creative teaching strategies which takes account of different learning styles, challenging and encouraging all our children to reach their true potential and become motivated and independent learners.

2. Aims and Objectives:

At St Mary's we aim to:

- Enable children to become confident, resourceful, motivated, enquiring and independent learners for life, in order for them to become valued members of society.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of their own faith journey and an understanding and tolerance of other faiths and cultures.
- Establish an ethos of excellence and enjoyment by fostering challenge, confidence, and self-esteem in all children and staff.
- Develop a mutually dependent and interactive partnership for learning, based on trust and understanding between children, parents, governors and staff, in order to raise academic standards and promote the well-being of learners.

- Provide access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum.

3. Role of the Teacher

(a) Personal skills and professional values

Learning is effective when teachers:

- Actively contribute to and share responsibility for the corporate life of the school.
- Build good relationships with the children; valuing, encouraging and challenging them to do their best, whilst being fair and firm.
- Are positive, enthusiastic, confident, inspirational and calm, showing empathy and humour.
- Are well prepared, adaptable, willing to embrace new ideas and open-minded to change.
- Take account of equal opportunities.
- Build effective relationships with other professionals (including outside agencies and visiting specialists), parents/carers and Governors.
- Take responsibility for the influential role they play in children's lives.
- Are mindful of being role models to the children both in and outside of the school environment.

(b) Knowledge and Understanding

Learning is effective when teachers:

- Have a good knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, National Curriculum and the Primary Revised Frameworks (are these still applicable?!) as appropriate.
- Have good subject knowledge with focused learning objectives that facilitate progression.
- Have an understanding of how children learn, including different learning styles, abilities and preferences by providing differentiated activities to meet these needs.
- As subject leaders, employ whole school agreed policies/systems to enable them to have an over-view of the strengths and weaknesses within their subject, and an appropriate plan of action to raise standards.

(c) Teaching Strategies

Learning is effective when teachers:

- Focus beyond **what** children learn and consider **how** they will learn and how (the teachers needs) they need to intervene and support the process.
- Structure lessons well – have focused learning objectives (LO) which relate directly to the EYFS Curriculum or National Curriculum. LOs reflect the learning that is taking place rather than the task and are written in a language that children understand.
- Lessons include learning tasks that **are** meaningful and engage learners. Throughout the lessons there is the opportunity for learners to reflect and review on what has been learnt.
- Demonstrate a wide range of teaching strategies to accelerate learning. Use visual, auditory and kinaesthetic teaching styles to ensure that all children are reached in a way that suits their particular learning style.

- Use a range of questions that aim to ascertain understanding, challenge and extend learning.
- Model and demonstrate, use stimulating foci and teach memory and study skills.
- Encourage and allow pupils to develop the skills and understanding required for effective behaviour for learning.
- Mark English and Maths work daily and in accordance to the school's marking policy, indicating what children need to do next in order to raise their own attainment.
- Make the most of opportunities to learn together, reflecting on their own experiences and sharing good practice with colleagues especially those who are new to the profession.
- Try new ways of working, embrace new ideas and take pedagogical risks.

See Appendix A- St Mary's Agreed Criteria – 'What makes a good lesson?'

(d) Planning, assessing, recording and monitoring

Learning is effective when teachers:

- Follow the agreed long, medium and short term planning systems in school.
- Use assessment for learning techniques on a daily basis to ensure that children have acquired the necessary learning in order to proceed. Evaluate lessons and annotate short term planning to identify modifications to the learning and teaching process.
- Have high expectations of children's work in both content and presentation.
- Set challenging but realistic targets and communicate them to the children.
- Take account of children's special educational needs and any additional needs that children have.
- Set Small Measurable Achievable Realistic Targets for children with identified SEND on their IEP and communicate them to both the child and key staff. Assess children's progress against targets identified on their IEPs.
- Differentiate the learning to match the needs of all groups of learners. (See Appendix B- How do you differentiate?)
- Formally and informally assess children's work on a regular basis and keep effective records in line with our Assessment policy and cycle of self-evaluation and monitoring timetable.

(e) Creating a learning environment

Learning is effective when teachers:

- Create an environment which is rich and stimulating, well-resourced well-organised and tidy, where children are encouraged to have respect for and take pride in their school.
- Create a positive atmosphere where children are happy, comfortable, are encouraged to try their best and are praised for their efforts.
- Facilitate creative, personalised learning experiences.
- Develop an ethos of high expectation of good manners and positive behaviour, where no-one is intimidated and no one is humiliated.
- Promote a listening culture within the class.
- Maintain interesting and current English and Maths learning walls which are interactive, highlight LO, include technical vocabulary and accelerate learning.

- Change displays regularly, to reflect, celebrate, value and support children’s current learning and achievement.
- Group children in a variety of ways – individually, small groups, whole class, by ability and mixed ability groups as appropriate.
- Deploy and direct teaching assistants as effectively as possible, sharing with them the learning objectives of the lesson and your expectations.
- Provide a secure environment making sure all tasks and activities are safe by completing relevant risk assessments where appropriate.

(f) Communication with parents

Learning is effective when teachers:

- Inform parents of the targets that their child is working on within the term and about aspects of the curriculum to be studied so they can support their children’s learning e.g. half termly curriculum information.
- Communicate regularly with parents through meetings, homework diaries, reading records, letters and newsletters.
- Share concerns with parents if their child appears to be experiencing academic, behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. Record all meetings in the class cohort file.
- Meet with parents and verbally discuss expectations early in the year and then hold parent consultation evenings later in the Autumn Term and in the Spring Term.
- Write an annual report (Summer Term) commenting on progress made throughout the year and specific targets they will need to address to accelerate their child’s learning in the next term. Parents are given the option to make an appointment to see the class teacher after the written report has been sent out.

4. The Role of the Pupil

Pupils learn best when they:

- Feel respected and valued
- Feel the environment is non-threatening but challenging
- Are encouraged to take an active part in lessons
- Are prepared to listen to others
- Understand clear learning objectives for the lesson and success criteria e.g. LO and SC
- Are encouraged to reflect on prior learning
- Are given differentiated tasks appropriate to their ability and learning styles (see Appendix B)
- Are clear about the task and are supported when problems are encountered
- Are equipped with the correct apparatus for the task
- Develop independent learning strategies and are encouraged to take risks
- Are given opportunities to demonstrate their understanding
- Are encouraged to work at a pace to meet the challenges set
- Feel their efforts are rewarded appropriately
- Receive evaluative comments on their marked work indicating how to improve or what the next steps are in their learning

- Are given homework in line with the school's Homework Policy to reinforce learning

5.0 The Role of Parents/Carers

Pupils learn best when parent/carers:

- Promote a positive attitude to school and learning in general
- Offer support with homework (reading, spellings, tables, topic work)
- Attend parent consultations
- Attend wherever possible termly curriculum evenings
- Are aware of the targets that their child is working towards
- Inform school if there are any matters outside school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour
- Uphold the **Home School Agreement**
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality
- Provide the correct uniform including the correct PE kit
- Support the school in its Positive Behaviour Policy and Bullying Policy
- Support the school through voluntary support in the classroom, on trips and assisting in sporting events.

6.0 The Role of the Senior Leadership and Management Team

Pupils learn best when the Senior Leadership and Management Team:

- Promote the aims and ethos of the school
- Lead by example
- Have a focused School Improvement Plan that has involved all stakeholders and which develops a strategic plan to raise standards and promote learning
- Provide purposeful training for staff including the sharing of good practice to raise standards
Stay informed and abreast of new initiatives
- Be up-to-date with changes to the EYFS Curriculum, National Curriculum and statutory testing arrangements. Ensure that the quality of learning and teaching is good through lesson observation and staff discussion
- Assess, analyse and evaluate appropriate data to inform the next stages of strategic planning
- Communicate effectively with fellow colleagues, pupils, parents, and governors
- Develop good relationships with relevant professional agencies/organisations
- Allocate appropriate resources effectively and efficiently
- Represent the school to outside agencies in a professional, positive and informed way.

9 The Governing Body

The school is most effective when Governors:

- 'Talk up' the school as a centre of excellence in learning
- Fully support the work of the teaching and support staff
- Attend Governing Body meetings and regular sub-committee meetings to be informed of everything that is happening in school
- Play an active part in the leadership process of the school and the development of the School Development Plan
- Allocate resources through the school budget to support learning and teaching
- Act as a 'critical friend' to the Headteacher supporting her through policy making in raising standards, whilst setting challenging targets by means of Performance Management
- Supports the school's monitoring procedures
- Ensure school buildings and premises are best used to support successful learning and teaching, keeping abreast of Health and Safety regulations

10 Other Relevant Policies and Documents:

- Mission Statement and Schools Aims
- Behaviour Policy Assessment Policy
- Assessment Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Non-negotiables

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Signed: Chair of Governors

Date:

St Mary's School

Agreed Criteria- What makes a good lesson?

- Be ready in the classroom before the children arrive or the lesson begins. This sets the tone and your expectations with regards to behaviour during the lesson.
- Lesson planned using the agreed format e.g. learning objectives, progression, differentiation, key technical vocabulary, how TAs are supporting the learning and assessment opportunities.
- Set appropriately differentiated tasks that will ensure that all pupils are challenged appropriately.
- Ensure the learning objectives (LO) for each lesson fully match the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- The LO is displayed, shared at the start of a lesson and revisited with pupils during the lesson.
- Lessons are planned in a way to ensure that active learning takes place. Lessons should make learning exciting and stimulating.
- Assessment for Learning strategies used during the lesson e.g. response partners, no hands zone, effective questioning using open, closed questioning techniques, focusing on individual targets where appropriate, using whiteboards so eliminating passengers! Use the successful learner board as a dialogue for positive attitudes towards learning.
- Have good subject knowledge of curriculum area being taught.
- Teaching assistants are deployed appropriately and directed well; they should reinforce and support the learning.
- To follow and implement the agreed behaviour system.
- Wherever possible to use ICT and VAK.
- To ensure that all lessons are well-paced and structured.
- In the EYFS to ensure a balance of child initiated (continuous provision) and teacher initiated activities.

Appendix B

How do we differentiate?

There are three categories of differentiation:

- ✚ Differentiation by task, which involves setting different tasks for pupils of different abilities; these tasks clearly challenge each group of pupils e.g. the depth and breadth of learning will differ depending on pupils ability.
- ✚ Differentiation by support, which means giving more help to certain pupils within the group.
- ✚ Differentiation by outcome; this involves setting open-ended tasks and allows pupils to respond at different levels.

- Teachers should aim to use all three categories of differentiation within class to ensure that all pupils are fully catered for and challenged.
- Amount of support provided should be indicated in planning.
- The level of challenge and learning will vary across groups.
- The level of independence may vary across groups.
- Selecting appropriate resources; some pupils will work with more advanced resources than others and different groups may use different resources/no additional resources to support their learning.
- Identifying pupils learning styles and developing this in the lesson.
- Questioning techniques, ideally indicated in planning and observed in lessons. Questions should not simply be used to test pupils current level of understanding, moreover they should be used to challenge and extend pupils current understanding.
- Tasks linked to IEP, pupil progress group targets or individual targets
- Grouping in the lesson.
- Differentiated toolkits/marking ladders.

Differentiation isn't simply:

- Providing one task of various lengths.
- Providing one task e.g. reading with a different number of questions for each group.
- Having the same task with an adult helping.