

Teaching for Learning Policy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School



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| Approved by: | Curriculum & Standards Committee | Date: October 2021 |
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| Last reviewed on: | October 2021 |
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| Next review due by: | October 2022 |
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Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Context | 2 |
| 2. Introduction | 2 |
| 3. Key Principles | 3 |
| 4. Curriculum | 4 |
| 5. Planning | 4 |
| 6. Pedagogy..... | 5 |
| 7. Assessment | 6 |
| 8. Learning Environment..... | 6 |
| 9. Support Staff | 6 |
| 10. Home School Links..... | 7 |
| 11. Monitoring | 7 |
| 12. Links with other policies..... | 7 |
| Appendix 1: Meeting the needs of the EAL child – language rich learning..... | 8 |
| Appendix 2: Meeting the needs of the SEN child | 9 |

1. Context

Learning and teaching is the core business of our school. It is our aim to motivate all of our pupils to have high aspirations, to want to do their personal best and to have the desire to be successful in and out of school. To prepare our pupils for a rapidly changing world, we need to create a stimulating and successful learning environment in order to nurture flexible, driven and creative learners.

This policy sets out the principles and expectations behind our approach, which is underpinned by the Teachers Standards, and in doing so provides new and existing staff with a clear vision of the school's expectations, providing an agreed focus for monitoring.

2. Introduction

Academic excellence, creativity and social Intelligence are at the heart of everything we do at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. We give each of these values equal weighting. Through a knowledge-rich curriculum, engaging teaching, great relationships and strong partnerships, we work hard to ensure that St Joseph's Catholic Primary School provides the best possible primary school experience for every child.

The purpose of a teaching and learning policy is to ensure that:

- › There is a high standard of teaching that instils a love of learning across the school.
 - › Learning takes place within an ethos of high expectation and aspiration for all.
 - › There is consistency of practice within and between year groups.
 - › Guidelines are set for the agreed principles and approaches which underpin teaching for learning in our school.
 - › Everybody is clear about the roles they fulfil.
 - › There is equality of access and opportunity for all children.
 - › The school's ethos is evident in practice.
 - › We provide a safe, happy, healthy and friendly environment, which enables children to develop their self-esteem and decision-making skills enabling them to make a positive contribution to school life and beyond.
 - › We work hand-in-hand with parents/carers and members of the community.
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We believe that children learn best when:

- › They are made to feel secure and confident.
- › They are involved in the learning process.
- › A variety of resources are used.
- › They are presented with learning tasks that are meaningful, relevant and appropriately pitched.
- › Varied pedagogical styles and lesson structures are used to good effect.
- › Access to the learning in lessons is planned for.
- › They are made aware of different learning styles and recognise those with which they feel most comfortable and enabled to learn.
- › They are encouraged to reflect and be resilient.
- › The classroom environment is extended to include the outdoor learning environment of the school, the immediate locality and the wider, surrounding area

We believe that teachers teach most effectively when:

- › They feel valued within the school community.
- › They develop excellent relationships with the individuals in their class.
- › Ensure the teaching style matches the learning style.
- › They work as part of a mutually supportive team (whole school and within year groups).
- › They are able to work collaboratively with colleagues, planning and evaluating together.
- › They feel supported to take risks.
- › They have access to high quality professional learning opportunities.
- › They have regular release time to plan and evaluate the curriculum.
- › They have good support from additional adults and other agencies.
- › They are clear about their aims and share them with learners.
- › Clear boundaries for conduct are set.
- › They have excellent subject knowledge.
- › They motivate, enthuse and engage learners.
- › They develop effective relationships with parents.
- › They have regular constructive dialogue about learning and self-assessment with individual learners.
- › A positive, purposeful, relaxed working environment is established and maintained.

3. Key Principles

- › Our teaching for learning policy enshrines the distinctive approaches adopted by the school to ensure the highest possible achievement and development of each individual child.
- › Our inclusive approach to teaching is learning-centred. We provide our curriculum, assessment and teaching on a solid understanding of children's needs and how they learn best. (Assess).
- › Learning activities are well planned from Reception to Year 6 so as to ensure solid progress in the short, medium and long term (Plan).
- › Teaching and learning activities engage pupils and motivate them learn, ask questions, reflect and build on their own learning (Do).
- › Assessment informs teaching during lessons and on a daily basis in high quality marking, and
- › Feedback so that there is provision for support, repetition and extension of learning for each pupil, at each level of attainment (Review).

- › The learning environments (classrooms, shared areas, equipment, play spaces, halls, resource areas) are ordered, the atmosphere is purposeful and pupils feel safe.
- › There are strong links between home and school, and the importance of parental involvement in their pupils' learning is recognised, valued and built upon.

4. Curriculum

Knowledge helps develop well-rounded, empowered citizens and widens opportunities and life chances. The specifics of what we want children to learn are important. Skills, vocabulary and conceptual understanding are forms of knowledge. Skills such as critical thinking and problem solving need to be taught within specific subject contexts. Pupils are empowered through knowing things and acquiring powerful knowledge. We want children to develop into well-rounded citizens with a range of strong character traits that will emerge through being immersed in a knowledge-rich curriculum.

We believe that children learn best when:

- › Subject specific teaching (high quality) allows both the knowledge and skills of the subject can be explicitly taught whilst supporting children to recognize meaningful connections and links with prior learning.
- › Schemes of work are planned in advance and fully resourced so that learning can be carefully sequenced and a variety of learning activities included.
- › The curriculum provides a clear progression model, supporting the layering of new knowledge on secure foundations and enabling children to build secure schema.
- › Units are planned to incorporate learning from cognitive science: spaced retrieval practice, formative low-stakes testing, and strategies to build fluency and long-term memory retention and retrieval.
- › Explicit vocabulary instruction is included in all subjects. We believe that strong language skills underpin all learning.
- › Curricular visits are planned to deepen, enrich and build on classroom learning as well as giving children opportunities for personal development.

Differentiation and Inclusivity

Taking a mastery approach, differentiation occurs in the support and intervention provided to different pupils, not in the topics taught, particularly at earlier stages. There may not be differentiation in content taught, but the questioning and scaffolding individual pupils receive in class as they work through problems will differ, with higher attainers challenged through more demanding problems which deepen their knowledge of the same content. Pupils' difficulties and misconceptions are identified through immediate formative assessment and addressed with rapid intervention. This is an inclusive approach to individual learners' needs, ensuring language, questioning, concepts and ultimately learning is accessible to all.

5. Planning

Purpose of planning is so that pupils have a clear understanding of the method and purpose of activities in which they are engaged

Effectively planned lessons are evident where notable progress in the pupils' learning takes place (seen over time in their exercise books, feedback to marking, displayed work on displays, in their targets, in their assessments both formative and summative, in conversation, in their attitudes to learning).

Planning is a process not a product. It has one purpose, to enable high quality delivery which meets the needs of all pupils.

- › Planning builds on what pupils can already do and considers what they will need to learn next.
- › Be clear and precise about the knowledge/skills you want pupils to learn, not what you want them to do.
- › Think 'so why?' - Activities, including homework, must be designed to facilitate learning/remembering and not to keep pupils busy.
- › There must be evidence of long-term planning informing medium term sequencing of topics.

- Medium term sequences are translated into short term lesson rehearsal; consider key objectives, intended outcomes (sticky learning), questions, vocabulary, additional needs, resources.
- Access should be planned to ensure a 'quality first' approach which meets the needs of all pupils and groups and maximises the use of any additional adult(s) in the room.
- All lessons must get off to a flying start, with ALL pupils accessing from the start; this should include retrieval of prior learning.
- Consider timings to ensure appropriate pace for the intended learning.

Thinking about learning objectives

A learning objective should be:

- **SPECIFIC** - Objectives that begin with "to know" or "to understand" can be vague whereas a more specific verb can help to focus teaching and learning – "to compare", "to justify", "to analyse".
- **CHALLENGING** – All children should be able to access learning in order to develop and reach their full potential
- **THE FOCUS FOR ACTIVITIES** - An activity cannot be a lesson objective but it is the means by which the child makes progress towards the objective. So, for example, "to draw a picture from observation" is not in itself an objective. We need to look at the skills the child will need to be able to carry out the activity. The objective might be "to use different pencil marks to represent areas of shade".

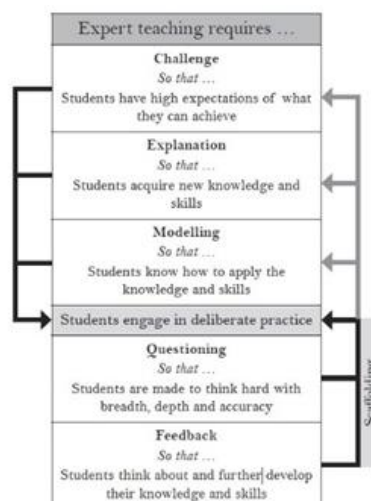
6. Pedagogy

Teachers are clear that their role is to teach in a precise way which makes it possible for all pupils to access and engage successfully with learning and the planned curriculum at an appropriate level of challenge. This requires strong direct instruction, with teachers able to deliver content with clarity, confidence and precision. Direct instruction is interspersed with age-appropriate pupil tasks to enable pupils to rehearse and consolidate their understanding, moving on to new content, in a timely fashion.

Continual reflection and professional learning is crucial for effective teaching for learning, and to ensure teachers are equipped with the necessary skills to facilitate educational inclusion and academic resilience.

The 6 Pedagogical Principles:

Our Teaching for Learning ethos is underpinned by the following diagram, designed by Shaun Allison and Andy Tharby (2015) 'Making Every Lesson Count'.



Structuring our engagement with these principles, are Barak Rosenshines "Principles of Instruction" (2012), which provide research based strategies for effective teaching. These are helpfully organized into four strands in "Rosenshine's Principles in Action" (Sherrington, 2019) which facilitates staff pedagogical development and professional learning.

These principles are key to effective teaching but by its very nature, teaching is a creative profession so there is no prescribed formula for the way they are implemented in the classroom. We consider how these principles are best implemented to present subject and lesson specific concepts in the most effective way to pupils.

7. Assessment

Assessment plays a crucial role in teaching for learning. A variety of methods for Summative and formative assessment are used. The purpose of feedback and assessment within the context of teaching for learning is threefold: to inform the teacher of a child's attainment and therefore to inform future planning; to inform a child of how well they have done and what they need to do next; to motivate a child through celebrating success.

See Assessment, Marking and Feedback policy for further guidance.

8. Learning Environment

Stimulating Conditions for Learning (Learning Environments)

The learning environments (classrooms, shared areas, equipment, play spaces, halls, resource areas) are ordered, the atmosphere is inspiring, purposeful and pupils feel safe.

In practice this means:

- › An atmosphere of mutual respect between adults and pupils.
- › Pupils who feel secure to speak and act freely, enjoying freedom from bullying and harassment that may include prejudice-based bullying related to special educational need, gender, race or religion.
- › Pupils taking risks in their learning, and learning from their mistakes.
- › Pupils learning outcomes displayed around the classroom and the school for others to appreciate and admire.
- › Organisation of classroom routines and resources to optimise learning and develop pupil organisational skills.
- › Working walls are in line with school policy and are updated regularly.

The classroom environment inspires children to engage in learning and have high standards of themselves which is reflected in their: books, attitudes to learning and relationships.

Staff will ensure:

- › They teach pupils how to behave well.
- › They uphold and refer to the school's rules at all times.
- › They apply the behaviour and discipline policy consistently.
- › They employ positive strategies for managing pupil behaviour that help pupils understand the school's expectations and that these strategies are underpinned by the clear range of rewards and sanctions set out in the school's behaviour policy, and these are applied fairly and consistently.
- › Good behaviour is modelled by them at all times in their interaction with pupils and other adults with conflict dealt with in a calm and fair manner – they will never shout or lose their temper.
- › Pupils will be encouraged in their learning and their efforts will be praised both in the classroom and in assemblies.
- › Any feedback will be constructive and pupil's self-esteem will always be maintained.

9. Support Staff

Our teaching assistants are a very valuable resource but we need to ensure that they have a direct impact on pupils' learning. We have looked at the Education Endowment Fund's findings regarding making best use of learning support assistants and we will work towards the following principles:

- › The focus is always on high quality first teaching which is supported by teaching assistants.
- › Our teaching assistants should work across the ability range.
- › The quality of language and the questions our teaching assistants use is shown to have an impact on pupils' ability to be independent learners i.e. ask the pupil to solve the problem, decide on the resources needed rather than being given the answer.
- › We aim to ensure that there is time for teachers and teaching assistants to meet to plan their work together
- › Teaching assistants are provided with training or appropriate support for any interventions they are running.

10. Home School Links

There are strong links between home and school, and the importance of parental involvement in pupil learning is recognised, valued and built upon. Pupil's home-learning is valued, both that resulting from tasks and activities set by the teacher and that which occurs independently of school.

Home school links work best when we:

- › Provide useful feedback about pupil learning is given regularly to parents, both informally, when appropriate, and formally, through termly parent, teacher meetings and an annual written report,
- › let parents know how they can support their child's learning at home or in school,
- › share homework information clearly,
- › are approachable and available to parents (by appointment if necessary),
- › share information about class trips, class and school events, and other relevant topics efficiently to parents via letter or email,
- › ensure parents are informed about school events and relevant topics through regular information sharing via letters, text messaging, notice boards and the school website.

11. Monitoring

Teaching over time is monitored through regular scrutiny of plans, pupil work in books, displays, behaviour analyses and lesson observations. Feedback will always be given promptly and will summarise the key strengths of the work as well as areas for improvement. A rigorous and content-rich CPD programme will ensure that all staff take part in deep and engaging pedagogical reflection and apply this consistently to their practice. Staff take responsibility for seeking development activities as well as taking direction on this.

Throughout the year, regular lesson observations, book and lesson plan scrutiny will be carried out by Teams as well as individual subject leaders. Individual subject leaders are responsible for having clear and shared intentions for their subject as well as driving improvement. Lesson observations are usually carried out in pairs. The standard of teaching for learning is determined by triangulating lesson observations, book scrutiny findings and pupil progress data.

12. Links with other policies

- › Behaviour Policy
- › Assessment Policy
- › Curriculum Policy
- › Equality Information and Objectives Policy
- › SEN Policy
- › Staff Code of Conduct

Appendix 1: Meeting the needs of the EAL child – language rich learning

- Try to ensure that every child is actively learning - consider use of support and whether, in the early stages of English acquisition, a different activity is required.
- Identify key words for each activity and teach spelling rules.
- Include the child in class routines such as giving out books, taking messages etc. and make sure that you teach the appropriate vocabulary for the activity.
- Make sure that text, including work sheets where used, use simple sentences wherever possible.
- Links and communication with parents is vitally important.
- Make use of visual stimuli wherever possible and give the child every opportunity to speak in English.
- Value the mother tongue of each child

Appendix 2: Meeting the needs of the SEN child

We try to ensure that every child can access the learning objectives in each lesson, but for children with special educational needs, there are some additional points we try to consider. These points need to be read in conjunction with the SMART targets found in a child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

- All children, but especially those with special needs, need access to resources and equipment to support their learning.
- Is the activity at the right level? Does the intended learning activity acknowledge the child's individual learning style?
- Identify key words and provide a word list.
- Plan for support to be provided but not for the whole lesson.
- Scaffold the learning e.g. writing frames, number lines.
- Insist on high standards of work in every piece of work.
- Make sure the child forms his/her letters correctly. If he/she doesn't, do something about it!
- Praise success at every opportunity - look for the small steps!
- If we are asking the children to become successful, independent and quality learners, then we need to support them with an environment that gives the same message. All the classrooms at St Joseph's have some elements of the following prompts, but there are improvements we can still make:
 - Are resources clearly labelled, accessible and used independently by the children?
 - Are displays of children's work of a high quality with work mounted and labelled? Do I have any displays that prompt the children to think around the topic?
 - Is the learning wall/environment used by the children?
 - Do the children know what the next learning step they are working towards?
 - Is my room free of clutter or am I using it as a storage area for things that would be better stored elsewhere?
 - Do the children take pride in their learning and are they able to articulate what high quality learning and work looks like/feels like