

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Teaching and Learning Policy

September 2025

Mission Statement

St Mary's school community follows the teachings of Jesus Christ, working together to develop the whole child, in a spiritual, moral, academic, physical, social and emotional way, within a caring and supportive environment.

Ethos

We recognise that there is a challenge in creating an enriching environment for all those involved at every level of school life. We take our lead and inspiration from Christ with regard to the Gospel values: the belief that all human beings are uniquely created and loved by God and worthy of respect. This challenge manifests itself in the way that we treat and value:

- Our relationships with each other and the wider community;
- Our respect for one another;
- Our welcome to and interest in all those who visit our school;
- Discipline inspired by forgiveness, healing and reconciliation;
- Our school environment.

Through rising to this challenge we aim to create an awareness of a sense of belonging to and being part of the life at St Mary's.

The school is focused on developing the wider skills and abilities of pupils and initially achieved the Dr. Edward de Bono Thinking Schools Award in summer 2008 and subsequently the Thinking Schools' Award from the University of Exeter. We hope by actively teaching thinking skills including maps and hats, Philosophy for Children and Habits of Mind to enable pupils to have an increased focus on their work in school and to develop as independent learners.

1. Introduction:

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for teaching and learning at St. Mary's School.

The policy reflects the beliefs of the governors and the staff.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all members of the St. Mary's School Community.

2. Purpose:

Education is the purpose of our school. We offer a curriculum which is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the Education Reform Act relating to Religious Education, Collective Worship and The National Curriculum.

This Teaching and Learning policy lays the foundations for the whole curriculum, both formal and informal and, along with our Mission Statement and Aims, forms the context in which all other policy statements should be read. It is written for the benefit of all members of the school community to ensure that all are aware of the fundamental principles underpinning the work of the school.

3. Aims & Principles:

Our aims for teaching and learning are that all children will:

- achieve their potential in terms of spiritual awareness, academic achievement and aesthetic appreciation.
- be tolerant and understanding with respect for the rights, views and property of others.
- develop a responsible and independent attitude towards work and towards their roles in society.

We see teaching and learning as a process of co-operative team work and welcome and encourage the involvement of parents and others in the community.

4. Beliefs:

We believe that effective learning takes place when:

- pupils feel valued and respected as individuals and are actively involved in the learning process.
- classroom relationships are built on mutual tolerance and respect
- pupils are encouraged by their teachers and are given opportunities to enjoy a genuine sense of achievement.
- there is a common awareness that high standards of self-discipline and order are expected.
- the environment in which pupils and teachers are working is stimulating, comfortable and safe.
- lessons are well prepared with tasks and resources appropriate to pupils' learning needs.
- children, teachers and other adults in school are respected.

5. Responsibilities:

All members of St. Mary's community (teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, pupils, governors and visitors) are expected to work towards the school's aims by:

- valuing children as individuals and respecting their right to education in a caring, secure environment.
- fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community.

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- providing a well ordered environment in which all are fully aware of behavioural expectations.
- offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life.
- encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviour and work.
- working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another.

Teachers work towards the school's aims by:

- providing a stimulating programme of study ensuring that the teaching styles including the use of thinking skills, resources and tools pupils encounter are varied and challenging, offering opportunities for the highest standard of personal achievement by pupils across the ability range.
- providing lessons which are prepared, structured including appropriate thinking tools and paced to make effective use of the time available.
- ensuring, through assessment and accurate record keeping, that learning is progressive and continuous
- ensuring that pupils have a clear and common understanding of the high expectations held of them individually, according to their ability and aptitude and of the targets to which they are working.
- giving pupils opportunities to review and reflect upon their progress and, where possible, to involve them in planning the next steps in their learning.
- maintaining an up to date knowledge of the curriculum they are delivering.
- establishing links with the local community and other schools to prepare pupils for the next steps in their education.
- communicating regularly with parents and keeping them informed of children's progress, topics to be studied and curriculum developments.

Pupils work towards the school's aims by:

- respecting themselves and each other as members of God's family.
- respecting and cooperating with each other in the classroom and playground.
- respecting school equipment, supplies and furniture.
- being positive and encouraging to other pupils.
- participating fully in school masses and liturgical services.
- being kind and respectful towards all staff and visitors.
- respecting other pupils' school materials and personal property.
- using appropriate language.
- attending school regularly.

- being punctual and ready to begin lessons on time.
- being organised bringing necessary kit, taking letters home promptly, returning reading and Library books regularly.
- making full use of all the opportunities with which they are presented.

Parents work towards the school's aims by:

- ensuring that their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- ensuring that children arrive at school with the correct uniform and equipment.
- providing support for discipline within the school and the teacher's role.
- being realistic about their children's abilities and offering encouragement and praise.
- participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainments.
- giving due importance to homework, hearing reading, and assisting in learning of tables and spellings.
- allowing their children to take increasing independent responsibility as they progress through the school.
- where time allows using their own talents in developing the school community by assisting in class, supporting our school at functions / events and supporting other school initiatives.
- keeping the staff informed of any changes in the child's circumstances which may affect their learning.

Monitoring

The Headteacher will monitor the implementation of the policy and will report to the Governors in accordance with agreed procedures.

Procedures

1. Strategies for Teaching and Learning

Our curriculum is organised in subjects and strong cross curricular links are made where appropriate. Classes are organised by age and single age year groups are taught in each class.

- Within each class whole class teaching, group work and individual work are used where and when appropriate.
- Groups are usually of mixed ability although matched ability sets may be used in maths, and for aspects of English and science
- Discussion is encouraged as we believe children need time to think through / discuss before committing to paper. Some periods of the day are set aside for quiet/silent work especially at Key Stage 2. Children are encouraged through the use of thinking maps, hats and other processes to think through their learning and structure their thoughts.

All teachers teach all subjects to their classes (except on occasions of class release), seeking the advice and support of subject leaders where necessary. Individual instrumental tuition is provided by teachers employed by the Enfield Music Service. French is taught by a specialist for all junior classes and PE specialists are used to teach PE sessions twice a week to all classes.

Classroom helpers are available in the form of paid classroom assistants and volunteer helpers. As appropriate and at the discretion of the class teacher and headteacher they assist:

- in the classroom, working with small groups or individuals, supervising group work, art and technology, I.C.T. and listening to readers.
- in sports activities,
- on outings and visits

with bulk photocopying and filing

- by providing other help, such as developing contacts with local groups and places of interest.
- secondary school pupils and further education students on work experience placements are accepted into school and certain standards of dress and conduct are expected.

Teachers draw up their own termly and weekly plans for their class making reference to the National Curriculum, our policies and schemes of work as well as thinking tools and skills. We follow the National Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum documents, and units of work approved by the Diocese of Westminster for Religious Education.

Pupils with special educational needs are identified and supported in line with our special needs policy and the Code of Practice.

Homework

As a community we consider homework to be a valuable element of the teaching and learning process, therefore:

- children are encouraged to work at home on a regular basis
- it is expected that all children will read at home and share books with their parents
- children will have multiplication tables and spellings to learn at home.
- children who have made insufficient effort during class time may be asked to complete work at home.
- extra homework tasks will be given to children as they progress through Key Stage 2 to help them prepare for life in secondary school.
- further practice in basic skills may be set at the class teacher's discretion.
- homework is monitored by being checked and marked by teachers. Parents are also asked to monitor their children's homework.

Homework clubs are available to children (Years 1-6) to support pupils / parents with the completion of homework tasks.

(Refer to Homework Policy for further information)

Excellence in achievement/effort is celebrated by:

- giving each child an opportunity to have work of a high standard displayed at some time in the school year.
- encouraging sustained effort including drafting and reworking to enhance standards.
- seeing school events such as concerts and plays as opportunities for all children to be involved and to make a contribution. Technicians are given as much praise and value as performers.
- encouraging pupils to believe that any work to be displayed should represent the highest standards of their own personal effort and achievement.
- class teachers sending particularly pleasing pieces of work to the headteacher, children are rewarded with a sticker/written comment and verbal praise.
- a variety of stars, stickers, certificates and stamps may be used by class teachers.
- weekly Merit Certificates and Thinking Star Certificates are awarded and displayed in the school's main entrance area.

2. Strategies for ensuring progression and continuity.

Planning is a process in which all teachers are involved, wherein

- the foundation for curricular improvement will be the School Development Plan, developed through a process of consultation between staff and governors.
- the schemes of work drawn up/adopted by the staff will be carefully balanced to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum as well as the incorporation of thinking tools and skills.
- schemes of work for individual subjects, will be regularly reviewed and adapted by subject leaders.
- work plans are drawn up by individual teachers for each term to cover all areas, and are monitored by the headteacher and subject leaders. Teachers also prepare detailed weekly Literacy and Numeracy plans as well as a weekly plan highlighting objectives for other subjects. The teaching and use of thinking maps, hats and Habits of Mind are incorporated into teachers' planning.
- regular staff meetings are timetabled to discuss and evaluate various aspects of the curriculum and to ensure consistency of approach and standards – these will include opportunities to plan in Key Stages for the following term.

Subject Leaders have a variety of roles. They;

- take the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in their subject throughout the school.
- monitor progress in their subjects / areas of responsibility and advise the headteacher and Governors on action needed.
- organise and purchase central resources for their subjects within the budget and priorities identified in the School Development Plan.

- are expected to keep up to date through reading and attending relevant courses.
- support colleagues by advising on planning, resources and developments in their subject area.

Feedback to pupils about their own progress is achieved through the marking of work. Effective marking;

- aims to help pupils develop, not merely find faults. Our teachers aim to use positive comments and mark work to the learning objective.
- identifies errors in pupils' work and provides constructive advice for improvement.
- is at the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 often done in the presence of the pupil and includes discussing the work
- is carried out promptly before the teaching of the next lesson and provides feedback that results in action.
- is consistent within key stages, and carried out with discretion so that a child can assimilate a limited number of corrections at one time--this will vary according to the age and ability of the pupil.

Summative Assessment (Assessment of Learning) is used to summarise where learners are at a given point in time – it provides a snapshot of what has been learned (in terms of both attainment and achievement). Suitable tasks for assessment of learning include:

- end of unit/topic assessments
- end of year tests
- end of Key Stage SATs tests.

These assessments determine end of year stages / grades for individual pupils which are recorded on the School's tracking system.

Formative assessment (Assessment for Learning) is used to guide the progress of individual pupils. It involves identifying each child's progress in each area of the curriculum, determining what each child has learned and what therefore should be the next stage in his/her learning. It is underpinned by the confidence that every learner can improve. It involves both learner and teacher reviewing and reflecting on assessment data. Formative assessment is mostly carried out informally by teachers in the course of their teaching. Suitable tasks for assessment for learning include:

- questioning of pupils.
- discussion between the pupil and teacher, either individually or in small groups, perhaps in the context of a practical task.
- use of tests relevant to the unit of work being studied.
- marking and monitoring of class work.
- teacher / classroom assistant observation of the pupil particularly during practical tasks.
- formative use of summative assessment data.

Cross Phase continuity is ensured by:

- links with the secondary schools which we feed.

- visits to secondary schools by Years 5 and 6 pupils.
- transfer of pupils' records and teacher assessments within school (in July) and also to each child's secondary school during the summer / autumn term
- discussions between teachers both within the school, and between the Year 6 teachers and the secondary schools.

3. Strategies for Recording and Reporting

In line with our assessment arrangements records of progress kept for each child are:

- updated at least once a year by the class teachers and contain samples of pupils' work.
- examined by class teachers at the start of each academic year as they prepare for their new class.
- available for parents to view, providing statutory notice is given.

Reporting to Parents is done on a termly basis through Parents' Evenings and annually through a written report. Parents are made aware that:

- parent interviews may be held immediately after school or early evening.
- they may meet their child's teacher or the Headteacher by appointment at any other time, to discuss particular concerns.
- parents of children that have been identified as having Special Educational Needs are invited to take part in their reviews.

4. Strategies for use of resources

Classroom resources are the responsibility of classroom teachers who ensure that;

- there is a range of appropriate, accessible and labelled resources available from which pupils can select materials suitable to the task in hand.
- all pupils know where resources are kept and the rules about their access and use.
- all children know what they must not touch for reasons of safety and privacy.
- children are encouraged to act independently in choosing, collecting and returning resources where appropriate.
- children and teachers work together to establish an attractive, welcoming and well organised classroom environment promoting respect, care and value for all resources.

Central resources are generally the responsibility of the subject leaders, each of whom is responsible for auditing and monitoring the use of resources. Budgets will be allocated to the subject leaders in accordance with the School Development Plan. Stationery is ordered by the Finance Officer and stored centrally with free access for all staff.

Time is a resource that we value. To maximise its use

- in all classes children's time is tightly organised by the teachers.

- as children progress throughout the school they are expected to take greater ownership of their own learning, including their use of time within a framework specified by the class teacher.
- time wasting is reduced by ensuring that tasks are made specific and clearly defined.
- children are made aware of the learning objective and procedure to follow at the start of a session.
- on entering the classroom children are encouraged to gather on the carpet in preparation for the next lesson, or to engage in useful activities.
- all children know what to do between the end of an activity and the end of a session.

I.C.T. is a major resource which is used across the curriculum.

The Library is a valued resource, children are encouraged to use it as a source of information and for fiction choices, and to treat its contents with respect.

Health and Safety issues are the responsibility of all who work in the school.

R. Martin

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