

St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School

Teaching & Learning Policy



Teaching and Learning Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and guidelines for full detail on features discussed herein:

- Curriculum policies and appendices
- Planning policy
- Assessment Policy
- Monitoring Policy
- Performance Management Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Foundation Stage Policy
- Display Policy
- SEN Policy
- G & T Policy

Aims:

- to provide a caring/loving environment which supports learning and provides good quality teaching;
- to ensure opportunities are given to develop high quality teaching
- to promote a love of learning where enjoyment is evident;
- to ensure all children achieve their potential and develop a lifelong love of learning across a broad range of subjects and experiences
- to ensure relationships between teachers and pupils are based on respect and individuals feel valued
- to regularly evaluate our approach to teaching and learning to ensure our aims are being met
- to develop the spiritual and prayer life of our pupils and community

Our mission statement is the focus for promoting spirituality and caring across the school and this is at the heart of all our teaching and learning:

Mission statement

At St. Joseph's School,
we aim to grow and learn together
within a loving and caring environment
which reflects the Gospel values.
We encourage all our children to reach
their full potential in
all aspects of their education.

Foreword

In this policy the distinction between teachers and learners is generally considered obvious, however, at times, these roles are changeable. For our school to maintain its high standards we recognise that:

- teachers too are lifelong learners and there is a structured provision for CPD as well as constant evaluation of practice and policy
- that pupils provide role models and concrete learning experiences for other pupils

Effective teaching is supported by:

The Curriculum

At St Joseph's School we follow the Here I Am Programme for RE and the National Curriculum in all other core and foundation subjects i.e. English, Mathematics, Science, ICT, PE, Art, DT, History, Geography, Music and, from September 2007, French.

RE is taught as a discrete subject although it also permeates the teaching of other subjects and all aspects of school life. Assemblies are planned to provide rich learning opportunities for pupils, which are also developed in the classroom, playground, dining hall and into the home. Such links are also consistently and positively applied between different assemblies and lessons.

The curriculum frameworks are also set up to ensure purposeful links and learning can be made between subjects allowing for integrated and exciting work to be carried out in school whether inside or outside the classroom.

In addition to statutory subjects we further enrich the curriculum through a variety of planned initiatives which include: Thinking Skills/ Philosophy for children, Paired Reading and Super Learning Days. Such experiences offer excellent opportunities for children to develop:

- their higher order thinking skills,
- awareness of themselves as learners,
- communication skills,
- the ability to be caring and supportive,
- respect for individual differences and the needs of others.

Inclusion refer to SEN and G & T Policy

Assessment and Analysis

Formative and summative assessments are carried out in school to track children's progress and to aid planning. Core subjects are assessed and analysed on a termly basis in order to track progress, set individual and group targets, inform future planning and assess where extra support and intervention programmes may be targeted. In addition, teachers evaluate progress of pupils within, and outside, individual lessons (assessment for learning).

Whole School and Classroom Environment

We recognise that not all teaching and learning takes place either inside the classroom or within formal lessons themselves. Learning at St Joseph's School is as much about personal, social, emotional and spiritual development as well as academic and it is recognised that such teaching and learning takes place in all that we do throughout our day at school. Such situations are not necessarily planned for individually as lessons but are informed by whole school policy, structures and routines.

A calm, orderly atmosphere across the school is maintained through a consistent approach to movement and routines around and between buildings and efficient organisation of our space. High expectations are set up from the moment children arrive in the school playground and the focus on a positive and focused attitude to learning begins at 8.55am when the whistle blows because children and staff are aware and supportive of these expectations.

Classrooms are organised in a practical, flexible way which makes the best use of light, space, access and comfort for children in terms of seating, interaction, movement, independent work and resources. Children have access to appropriate, good quality resources required for range of learning situations. Individual needs are considered also in terms of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic requirements.

Displays are accessible, colourful and engaging. There should be a balance between teaching display and the display of children's work which should be named and clearly labelled with attention paid to ensuring each child has work displayed and, therefore, work valued.

Classroom Practice

Lessons are always well planned and the following features are included (as and where appropriate to subject):

- the objective, content and activity match and complement each other
- well paced
- the objective is stated, explained and linked to previous learning at the outset
- a range of teaching strategies are used throughout– giving the big picture/small chunks, VAK and interactive/collaborative activities, thinking time, brain breaks to accommodate all learning styles
- use of good quality visual resources (and display where appropriate) to aid teaching concepts and ensuring the lesson is inclusive
- contains a minimum of 3 parts:
 - Introduction – objective and teaching input
 - Activity – guided and independent – differentiated as required (SEN, EAL, G and T)
 - Plenary – drawing the learning together/assessment opportunity/future steps (many lessons contain mini-plenaries/regular reviews to reinforce learning within sections)
- To ensure a positive and comfortable climate is maintained throughout lessons, children have access to water and participate in regular brain breaks.
- Teaching Assistants are purposely deployed throughout to support learning

Class Management

Each class agrees a set of rules at the beginning of each year which reinforce school expectations and are tailored to the needs and age of the class. This ensures children are aware of the expectations of conduct and behaviour within the classroom and around the school.

The teacher always follows and reinforces school guidelines and expectations, even within their own classroom where personal style is encouraged. Rewards and sanctions should be consistently applied and include (for full details see Behaviour Policy and guidelines):

- Merit stickers awarded by class teacher or TA
- Head Teacher's award
- Consistent recognition of positive attitudes and behaviour

School Structure and Professional Responsibilities

- Phase Groups Leaders: each area of the school (Foundation Stage, Years 1/2, Years 3/4 and Years 5/6) has a phase group leader whose role is to oversee high quality and consistent practice and planning is in place through modelling, informal monitoring, weekly and half termly planning meetings. They are directly managed by SMT to ensure this is in place.
- Subject coordinators: all curriculum areas, SEN, Assessment and Pastoral Care have a manager whose responsibility is to implement the following in order to provide an excellent and consistent approach to teaching of their subject:
 - resource the subject
 - provide medium term planning
 - supporting planning
 - monitor – planning, children's work, attainment
 - provide training
 - liaise and network with outside agencies and other co-ordinators

Staff Inset/Training/Meetings

Regular evaluation of practice ensures that all staff training and meetings address the needs of teachers and pupils. This is evaluated by SMT, subject managers and Phase Group Leaders. New initiatives, approaches and ideas from staff are also encouraged and carefully discussed and planned to ensure our approach is innovative and responsive to pupil's needs.

Performance Management and NQT Induction

The professional development of all staff takes full account of training and personal needs to ensure high quality teaching is targeted and sustained.

Effective learning takes place (in addition to the above) when:

Children are clear about what is expected of them, whether in terms of behaviour or in a learning situation. Although all the above structures should ensure this, children are entitled to be made aware of both what is expected of them and why in order that they can fully support it. This is addressed fully through a variety of platforms whether in class discussion, informal conversation, assemblies, during setting up the variety of initiatives and formal roles (e.g.

Prefects, School Council) where children are given opportunities to voice opinions and ask questions, to set rules and give advice.

Children are involved in their own learning, aware of own strengths and areas for development. Whilst teachers plan the learning experience, children are increasingly given support and guidance to understand, identify or select areas they need to target to move on. Opportunities are subsequently provided for such practice whether in school, at home or both through the setting of Literacy and Maths targets, using peer support, selecting challenges within activities and through marking.

Display (and resources) around the classroom acknowledges and values the children's efforts, progress and contributions as well as their own backgrounds and experiences. Opportunities are also given for them to interact with such displays and use them to enhance their own learning e.g. Punctuation Pyramid, working wall.

Children are offered stimuli, resources and experiences which engage and excite their curiosity and interest. This may be through using film, art or photography, field trips, drama, practical activity or cross curricular project work.

Children are encouraged to collaborate and interact whilst learning whether with their peers or contrasting age group. Such opportunities are regularly taken across the curriculum as this not only satisfies the child's natural desire to communicate but enables them to articulate and consolidate learning.

Children are given opportunities to think both independently and in pairs before answering questions thereby taking the threat and fear out of participating in whole class situations. More children are willing to 'have a go' once offered such opportunities. Teaching assistants also participate in such activities scaffolding and supporting less confident children's responses and allowing them to be included.

Children are given opportunities and encouragement to play positively, partly in order to let off steam and take a break from the classroom but also to develop their range of social and personal skills. This is encouraged by the proactive work of lunchtime workers and by the role of prefects in supporting younger pupils in using the marked playground areas cooperatively and appropriately. Such positive playtimes are further encouraged through sharing during assemblies.

Children feel they are valued and involved in the running of their own school. At St Joseph's children are given a voice in how the school is run, by taking part in School's Council, through regular class meetings where their opinions, questions and ideas are discussed. These are then taken to Council meetings where they realise their ideas are often agreed and implemented.

Children feel they have something to offer others, as in the case of the above structures and in initiatives such as paired reading, where older pupils are 'trained' to teach the younger ones. This results in powerful partnerships, a more cohesive school and a sense of pride and positive self esteem. All of which reinforces a positive approach to learning at St Joseph's School.

Positive home-school links are created and parents are encouraged to fully support their child. We have developed a range of structures to deliver this ranging from the initial target setting

evening at the beginning of the year, to regular class newsletters, homework diaries and timetables, encouragement to meet with teacher as a need arises and the availability of head teacher to support any arising issues. Additionally, social evenings and transition meetings allow parents to be fully aware of upcoming issues and developments, increasingly ensuring they too become part of the whole school community.

Exciting whole school projects are used to enhance learning as they provide opportunities to develop children's knowledge and skills in different and engaging ways, for example book weeks, Community Days and fundraising for Cafod.

Extra curricular activities are provided to promote the learning of children across a range of interests and needs. These include booster sessions around SATs time, sports clubs and drama projects.

Outside agencies/resources are used to provide exciting and different ways to engage children. We have links to a range of local resources which include:

- Salmon sports centre – all classes attend a timetabled session weekly with their teacher and support from a sports coach
- Seven Islands - Key Stage 2 swimming
- Globe Theatre – we have developed a strong relationship with the Globe who have worked with a range of Key Stage 2 classes.

We have also built up strong links with the Southwark Playhouse and Scary Little Girls who we work with across the school to promote Literacy and learning across the curriculum.

Our whole approach to learning is, therefore, to create a cohesive and caring community of learning which excites and engages children to learn. We believe that at St Joseph's School our approach is informed by the approach described below:

“Children learn better when they are excited and engaged – but what excites and engages them best is truly excellent teaching, which challenges them and shows them what they can do. When there is joy in what they are doing, they learn to love learning.”

Charles Clarke