



**A love of  
learning  
A desire for  
God**

**St Thérèse  
of Lisieux**  
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

## **St Mary's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy Teaching and Learning Policy**

<b>Date agreed by governors:</b>	<b>Sep 2019</b>
<b>To be reviewed:</b>	<b>3 yearly</b>
<b>Policy Holder</b>	<b>Head teacher</b>

### **Introduction**

At St Mary's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and children learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

### **Aims**

We believe that people learn best in different ways. At our school we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- to enable children to understand the special purpose God has given to them;
- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners;
- foster children's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people;
- build resilience and promote a 'Can Do' attitude.
- develop children's self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others;
- show respect for all cultures and, in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- enable children to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of this community;
- help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.

### **Values**

Teachers should identify opportunities for 'values' and ensure that these opportunities are explored in their teaching. Teachers should have sufficient knowledge of the 'values' element of the curriculum to be able to teach about values when unplanned opportunities arise.

### **Effective Learning**

We acknowledge that people learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them.

We offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. These include:

- investigation and problem solving;
- research and finding out;
- group work;
- paired work;
- independent work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions;

- use of ICT;
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- creative activities;
- experiencing and responding to multi-media;
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations;
- designing and making things;
- participation in athletic or physical activity.

We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way they learn, and to reflect on how they learn – what helps them learn and what makes it difficult for them to learn.

### Effective teaching

We recognise the need for teachers to approach planning and teaching in a bespoke way for their classes and subjects but also understand the need to base our teaching strategies on educational research such as Barak Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction.

Therefore, when teaching, wherever possible, teachers should ensure:

- there is a **daily review** to help strengthen the connections of the material learned. Automatic recall frees working memory for problem solving and creativity.
- that **new material is introduced in small steps**. Our working memory is small, only handling a few bits of information at once. Overload should be avoided. Present new material in small steps and proceed when first steps are mastered.
- they **ask lots of questions**. The most successful teachers spend more than half the time teaching, demonstrating and asking questions. Questions allow the teacher to determine how well the material is learned.
- they **provide models**. Students need cognitive support to help them learn how to solve problems. Modelling worked examples and teachers thinking out loud help clarify the specific steps involved.
- they **guide student practice**. Students need additional time to rephrase, elaborate and summarise new material in order to store it in their long-term memory. More successful teachers build in sufficient time for this.
- they **check pupil understanding**. Successful teachers check for understanding in all pupils.
- they **obtain a high success rate**. A success rate of around 80% has been found to be optimal. This shows that pupils are learning whilst also being challenged. To help with this, we try to teach in small steps and follow this with practice.
- there are **scaffolds for difficult tasks**. Scaffolds are temporary supports to assist learning. They can include modelling, teacher thinking aloud, cue cards and checklist. (this is not an exhaustive list)
- they provide opportunities for **independent practice**. Independent practice produces 'overlearning' – a necessary process for new material to be recalled automatically. This ensures no overloading of pupils' working memory.
- they facilitate **weekly and monthly reviews**. The effort involved in recalling recently learned material embeds it in long term memory. The more this happens, the easier it is to connect new material to such prior knowledge.

When teaching we focus on motivating the children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We use the school curriculum plans to guide our teaching. These detail what is to be taught to each year group.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's development needs.

Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of the children. To enable us to do this effectively we try to adhere to the following principles:

- classes do not have ability groupings (apart from RWI). Different levels of challenges should be set and children should decide on the level of challenge most appropriate to them.
- when planning for children with special educational needs, due regard is given to the information and targets set out in their pupil passport or Educational Health Care Plan.
- there is high expectations on all pupils. All children will succeed.
- there is a 'no hands policy' when questioning pupils which encourages all pupils to actively contribute to the learning taking place.

- mistakes are welcomed. Teachers use these as opportunities to address misconceptions, refocus thinking and reshape learning challenges. Children should be encouraged to take risks and use mistakes to move their understanding forward. Teachers should insist that corrections are made.
- academic targets for the children in each academic year and we share these targets with children and their parents. We review the progress of each child through the academic year and set revised targets if appropriate.
- Lessons are planned with clear learning objectives. We take these objectives from the National Curriculum or the or Early Years Development Matters. Our lesson plans contain information about the challenges to be set, prior and future learning, the resources needed, success criteria/learning outcomes and the way we assess the children's work, including AfL strategies. We evaluate all lessons so that we can modify and improve our teaching in the future.
- The mission statement should influence all we do. Teachers should promote a 'love of learning' at all times. We praise children for their efforts and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general.
- Teachers should model themselves as 'Lifelong learners'.
- Classrooms should be attractive learning environments. We follow the Learning Environments Policy in order to do this.

As teachers, we understand the need to involve a range of people in the teaching and learning process in school.

### **The Role of Governors**

Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on teaching and learning. In particular they:

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning;
- monitor teaching strategies in the light of Safeguarding and Health and Safety regulations;
- monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment;
- ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching;
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning policies through the school self-review processes.

### **The Role of Parents**

As a Catholic school we believe that parents are the primary educators of children. We support them in carrying out this duty. We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- parents are encouraged to come in to school to work alongside children in class, help with reading and support on school trips.
- use of homework diaries in Key Stage One and Two; use of home school books in Foundation Stage;
- regular reports to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can improve further;
- explaining to parents how they can support their children with homework.
- holding information sessions such as the school's approach to teaching phonics

We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We would like parents to:

- ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible;
- ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit;
- do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour at school;
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general;
- model themselves as life-long learners

**The Role of the Community**

We recognise that learning does not take place in a vacuum and that the local community can make valuable additional contributions to the educational experiences of our children. We therefore seek to involve the community in the life of the school through:

- sustaining and fostering a link with the Parish;
- contributing to special events in the community – e.g. Christmas and Summer Fare, Music and Drama Festival, Performances at local community events, Remembrance Service;
- identifying specialist talent to enrich our curriculum – e.g. Arts, Music, PE;
- links with local primary and secondary schools

**Monitoring and Review**

We are aware of the need to review the school teaching and learning policy regularly so that we can take account of new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school.

Subject leaders carry out an audit on a yearly basis which reflects on the strengths and weaknesses of the subject including areas of development and of focus for the coming year.