

St. Paul's Catholic Primary School



Teaching and Learning Policy

This teaching and learning policy outlines how we work and organise ourselves at St. Paul's to ensure that provision in our school is of the highest possible standard for the pupils that we teach. It will enable all children to make progress in every lesson taught and will ultimately raise standards. It was written as a result of developments in our practice and is owned by our teaching and support staff. It is based on our vision, aims and understanding of recent research. Members of the teaching team are expected to refer to it frequently and use it to help evaluate and modify practice to ensure the best provision for our children.

Aims

In order to raise standards at St. Paul's all children will receive teaching which is at least consistently good.

- * All teachers have high expectations for themselves and the pupils they teach.
- * Children expect and are expected to achieve well over time, to the best of their abilities.
- * Expectations are realistic and informed by a variety of assessment methods:
 - Rigorous teacher assessment
 - Peer assessment
 - Self assessment
- * Tasks set challenge, enthuse and motivate all groups of learners. Through the setting of targets and careful tracking, children are supported in achieving their potential.
- * All staff work in partnership with each other, parents and outside agencies.
- * Basic skills have a high priority.
- * Enquiry led learning is effectively used to promote independent, confident learners, who accept the challenges set.
- * Through dialogue with children we know that they understand the next steps in their learning.
- * A range of effective questioning ensures assessment for learning within lessons.
- * Staff are confident in their own skills and subject knowledge to adapt teaching in the light of assessment.

Principles

The principles that we have agreed are fundamental to children's learning and underpin the work that we do.

We aim to help children to become creative thinkers, who are not afraid to take risks and see mistakes as opportunities for learning. Children need opportunities to reflect and improve. We recognise that pupils are more likely to learn effectively if they are emotionally engaged in their learning. Teachers therefore aim to include children in the process and be as creative as possible in seeking ways of making learning interesting and successful. Our aim is to maximise every learning opportunity to enable children to be the best they can be at that moment in time.

Definition of Learning

We believe that children learn best when learning is:

- Stimulating, challenging, creative, fun, varied, practical, supported, progressive, reflective, interactive and enjoyable. It should build on experience and have built in success for all. It should be based on our good knowledge of the children so that it engages them. It should have high expectations of learning outcomes and it should always be purposeful and relevant.
- Owned by the children. They should have a role in the planning, choice of level, choice of resources, feedback and agreeing next steps.

Our whole school approach: consistency and high expectations

We believe that children learn best when there is consistency and continuity in our approach. We hold common expectations of our practice and through mutual challenge and support we ensure that it is of a consistently high quality.

With the support of the Senior Management Team we expect each teacher to take a full and determined responsibility for the progress of all of the pupils in their class. We expect teachers to have consistently high expectations of all pupils in all areas of their learning and school-life.

The purpose of our teaching and learning: pupil progress

We teach for progress. This means that we work to ensure that all pupils are improving skills, knowledge and understanding across all lessons and activities at a level that is appropriate for their stage, understanding and development.

We recognise the need for consolidation and practice, but we are vigilant in our avoidance of tasks that involve unnecessary repetition or low-levels of challenge.

We ensure that our lessons incorporate the following elements, so that all learners are able to succeed:

Pace:

We believe that lessons should move at a pace that allows children to remain enthused and engaged in their learning. This is done through the planning of clearly structured lessons, which include regular opportunities for reflection, evaluation and summarising of new concepts.

Differentiation:

We believe that children should not be held back in their learning and development. They should be supported to reach individual targets through lessons with clearly focussed and sometimes differentiated success criteria. This means that differentiation can be achieved through support, activity, resources or through focussed teaching in small groups.

Challenge:

Children are challenged in their learning, through well planned, differentiated activities and focussed marking. We believe that all pupils should be challenged, in order to achieve their maximum potential.

We recognise that successful teaching and learning involves a team approach...

Children

We encourage pupils:

- To be willing to have a go
- To try to see that mistakes are good because they can help all of us to achieve more
- To try to be resilient, persistent, reflective and resourceful
- To be supportive of others
- To be willing to share their learning with others.

Parents

Parents are essential in helping to support their children's learning. We encourage parents to:

- Attend parent information/workshop/open day sessions
- Have an open dialogue with the class teacher and teaching assistant
- To support the school policies (e.g. homework)
- Provide opportunities for children to practise and extend their learning at home

- To support the school and work in partnership with additional support for learning (e.g. Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Booster classes, Intervention programmes, Team Around the Child meetings, etc.)

Teaching team

- To secure good learning outcomes for pupils. Pupils to make good demonstrable progress and attainment.
- To secure a positive belief in the children that they can achieve.
- To support pupils in applying their learning to secure new learning (i.e. learning how to learn across contexts).
- To support each other in our own professional development.
- To communicate effectively with children, parents and other professionals regarding children's learning and welfare.

Senior Leadership Team

- To be positive role models to their teaching teams.
- To support their teams.
- To monitor and evaluate the impact of learning within their roles and teams.
- To hold members of their team to account.

Governors

- Governors will monitor and review this policy and more importantly its impact on practice through reports from the headteacher and members of staff.

Six core elements of our provision

1. Subject knowledge

We believe that children learn best when teachers are well-informed, knowledgeable and confident about what they are teaching. In order to develop this we:

- Direct ourselves as learners
- Extend and enhance our professional skills
- Develop our own awareness and self-esteem
- Contribute fully to the learning and success of the school and its children.

This can take many forms including:

- Collective and collaborative project work/observations/planning etc.
- Performance Management
- Staff meetings/INSET
- Off site courses
- Professional reading

2. Planning

Our planning is based on systematic and accurate assessment of our pupils' prior learning. We plan teaching strategies carefully, creatively and imaginatively, based on our knowledge of our pupils' needs. We choose, design and adapt tasks that will challenge all pupils, whatever the level at which they are working.

3. Interventions

We plan interventions that will support pupils and will move their learning forward. These are determined by our accurate knowledge of pupils' previous learning and by our high expectations of their progress. We know the impact that we expect these interventions to have and we evaluate them with regard to the difference they have made to pupils' learning.

4. Homework

We recognise the importance of pupils learning at home. We believe it helps them to consolidate and extend school learning as well as helping to involve families.

Our homework policy outlines the arrangements that we make to plan regular and appropriate homework at each stage of our school. We evaluate the effectiveness of our homework by the impact that it is having on pupils' learning.

5. Assessment for Learning

We use a range of techniques to systematically check our pupils' understanding throughout each stage of the lesson. We anticipate the most likely areas of misunderstanding and we prepare planned interventions and support that will address these. However, we are also ready to adapt our approach spontaneously when we meet unexpected misconceptions or difficulties.

6. Marking and feedback

We have agreements about our approach to marking: its frequency; content and depth. We plan regular routines for pupils to respond to marking, so that it improves their learning.

We give ongoing oral feedback to individuals and to groups of pupils throughout lessons. Our feedback is more often positive than negative. It is sharply focused on the learning and aptitudes that we want to improve.

The purpose of all our feedback: in marking, in target-setting and orally is to give pupils' precise and motivating information about how well they are doing and what they should do next to improve. We encourage pupils to take ownership of their work and steps to improve through the use of peer and self assessment. These are skills, which are specifically planned for, taught and modeled by teachers, so that marking becomes a two-way process, facilitating pupils in making progress.

Outcomes: basic skills, classroom climate, pupil attitudes

Basic skills

We recognise the centrality to learning of the core basic skills. We have organised our teaching programmes for reading, writing, communication and maths, so that there are clear lines of progression; consistent teaching approaches; high expectations of pupils at every stage and a rigorous assessment of pupils' learning and progress.

We design our whole curriculum to afford every opportunity for pupils to apply and so consolidate these core basic skills. Our expectations of their cross-curricular work are as high as those we hold in subject-specific lessons.

We use time very carefully, minimising waste and taking every opportunity to practise and reinforce core basic skills.

Classroom climate

Through careful and imaginative planning; our high quality teaching; good relationships and our high levels of teacher responsibility, we generate high levels of enthusiasm from our pupils. We expect pupils to be active participants in their learning and we structure routines and rewards to support them. We want our pupils to show commitment to their learning. We give positive feedback when we see examples of this and we take measured and thoughtful action when it is absent.

Pupil attitudes

We are developing the aptitudes of resilience, confidence and independence. We ensure that the tasks we choose give regular opportunities for pupils to develop these aptitudes. We explain their importance to learning. We notice and comment positively when pupils demonstrate these aptitudes and we model them in our own actions. We work with individual pupils to build these aptitudes where they are lacking.