

# St Paul's Catholic Primary School

## Teaching & Learning Policy



***'Together in Faith, Working as One'***

## **Mission Statement**

The most important factor in all our work is the Catholic ethos of our school and this is reflected in our school mission.

The policy is written in line with St. Paul's Mission Statement:

***'Together in Faith, Working as One'***

## **Intent**

We develop responsible, resilient, respectful pupils who value themselves, others and their learning. We aim for our children to be happy, inquisitive, reflective and ambitious individuals who can become lifelong learners ready for the next stage of their 'journey'.

Our curriculum is **CLEAR**:-

- ❖ **Challenging** – lessons are stimulating and provide opportunities for children to 'grapple' with concepts, utilising opportunities for regular lesson enhancements.
- ❖ **Language rich**– staff promote, develop and encourage high quality talk for learning so that all pupils can express themselves and communicate clearly and effectively in a wide range of situations.
- ❖ **Encouraging** – staff promote resilience through the development of a growth mind set and 'the power of yet'.
- ❖ **Aspirational** – staff have high expectations and the children dare to take risks and dream.
- ❖ **Reflective** – children are encouraged to consider their role in making our world a better place. 'LIVE WISELY, THINK DEEPLY AND LOVE GENEROUSLY' – (Pope Francis, Laudato Si)

## **Introduction**

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 because of developments in our practice and 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 and 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 and pupil self-assessment.
- ❖ Tasks provide 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 are non-negotiable and 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 own 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 findings.

### **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 expectation for 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 Leadership 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 their skills, knowledge and understanding across all lessons and activities at a level that is appropriate for their age, 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.

## Curriculum Organisation

For subject specific procedures and organisation, please see the 'St Paul's Way' document for each individual curriculum area. These set out the expectations for teaching and learning across each subject.

## Core Elements of 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 plans are based on systematic and accurate assessment of our pupils' prior learning. We plan teaching strategies carefully, creatively and imaginatively, based on our knowledge of pupils' needs. We choose, design and adapt tasks that will challenge all pupils, at 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.
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. We are ready to adapt our approach when we meet unexpected misconceptions or difficulties.
6. **Marking** - We have an agreed approach to marking: its frequency, content and depth. We plan regular times for pupils to respond to marking, so that it improves their learning. We give ongoing oral feedback throughout lessons. Our feedback 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 the steps

needed to improve by using peer and self-assessment so that marking becomes a two-way process, facilitating pupils in making progress.

### **Our lessons**

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.

### **Teamwork**

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 school policy (e.g. homework)
- Provide opportunities for children to practise and extend their learning at home
- To support the school and work in partnership with any additional support for learning (e.g. SEN Support Plans (SSPs), Booster classes, Intervention programmes, Team Around the Child meetings, etc.)

## **Staff**

- To secure good learning outcomes for pupils. Pupils to make good demonstrable progress and attainment.
- To secure a positive belief in the children's ability to achieve their potential.
- To support pupils in applying their learning to secure new learning (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 and support their teaching 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 its impact on practice through reports from the headteacher and subject leaders.

## **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 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 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 further support is required.

## **Assessment**

Pupils work is scrutinised during half-termly 'book looks' during staff meeting times. Pupils' writing attainment is assessed using writing expectation criteria (year group specific). Attainment in reading and mathematics are assessed using NFER testing (Y1-6). Science and foundation subjects are assessed at the end of each topic in the form of a post-learning task. Each teachers assesses whether pupils are *Working Below*, *Expected* or *Exceeding* age-related expectations at the three assessment points in the year. Teachers make their

formative judgements and these are recorded on the progress and attainment trackers. This is monitored and analysed by the Senior Leadership Team. For core subjects, targets are discussed with class teachers during termly pupil progress meetings and where necessary, targeted interventions are planned and added to the class provision maps. Progress and achievement are reported to parents/carers twice yearly, during parents' evenings and through written reports.

Assessment also takes place using:

- Pre-learning tasks at the start of each new topic focus on specific knowledge and vocabulary and these act as a baseline assessment.
- Post-learning tasks at the end of each topic focus on specific knowledge questions and assess learning over the topic.
- Sticky knowledge review questions start each lesson to enable pupils to retrieve and consolidate prior knowledge and their learning from the previous lesson.
- Marking and feedback identifies misconceptions and promotes challenge and includes next step questions.

### **Marking and Feedback**

Marking and feedback in all subjects is completed in line with whole school marking and feedback policy. Marking and feedback is approached positively and constructively so that it affirms and celebrates success and encourages future learning/next steps when appropriate.

Teachers continually make assessments using strategies such as:

- Looking at children's recorded work
- Teacher observations of children during lessons
- Speaking and listening contributions during lessons

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of each subject will take place regularly as part of a rigorous monitoring schedule, which involves all key stakeholders. Monitoring tasks will include but are not limited to; formal lesson observations, learning walks, book scrutiny, pupil and staff voice, parental questionnaires, display/environment walks and website checks. Governors are involved in whole school monitoring activities. Areas for development will be identified and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.

### **Displays**

Each class has a number of subject displays, which act as a working wall to show the learning journey through each unit. These are updated each half term to reflect the different topics covered with an emphasis on subject specific vocabulary.

### **Resourcing**

Year group specific resources are stored within individual classrooms and all other subject specific resources are held centrally in the main curriculum storage room.

### **Training and CPD**

All new staff will be supported during induction and beyond by subject leaders and the senior leadership team. Individual staff training needs will be identified and addressed through in-house training and from specialist providers where necessary. There will also be regular opportunity for whole-staff professional development throughout the academic year during INSET days and staff meeting sessions. Staff training ensures that all staff are able to fulfil their responsibility to deliver excellent teaching and learning across all subjects.

### **Health, Safety and Safeguarding**

As with all areas of the curriculum, the school's Health and Safety and Safeguarding policies and procedures are adhered to in all aspects of our teaching and learning.

### **Equal Opportunities and Inclusion**

A central message of the Catholic Faith is that although we are all different, God loves each one of us equally, regardless of background, gender or ability. It is therefore vital that we recognise and cater for the individual needs of children, acknowledging that all children have different talents and gifts and that these should be celebrated. The staff at St. Paul's will ensure that all children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum without stereotyping. Children with English as an additional language (EAL) will be supported through adjustments made to the curriculum, as necessary for them to have parity of access.

### **Review**

The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the Governing Body.

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