



Teaching and Learning Policy

Mission Statement

To follow in Jesus' footsteps, caring for each other when we work, play and pray.

Introduction

At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary, we believe in 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 make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We integrate metacognition techniques to help all children learn and thrive from their starting points, enabling them to become self-regulated learners who can plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning processes.

Impact

We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives. We are committed to promoting resilience among our pupils and developing their independent learning skills. The school's Catholic ethos strives to create a learning environment where every child is encouraged and enabled to develop as human beings, made in the image and likeness of God. We recognise that people can learn knowledge at a different pace and so take a scaffolded approach to teaching when needed. At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary 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:

- Enable children to become confident, resourceful, resilient, enquiring, and independent learners.
- Foster children's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people.
- Develop children's self-respect and encourage them to respect the ideas, attitudes, values, and feelings of others.
- Show respect for all cultures and promote positive attitudes towards other people.
- Enable children to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of this Catholic community.
- Help children grow into reliable, independent, and positive citizens.

The Learning Environment

We acknowledge that people learn in many different ways and recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all children to experience opportunities that best facilitate their learning.

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

Support for Learning

To become independent learners, children need to understand the learning process and how we provide them with what they need to learn. Children must be involved in reviewing their progress: self-evaluation, recording achievements, and target setting. Teachers must listen to the pupil voice, learning from pupils' comments about how they learn best. Whether by teacher, classroom supporter, other pupils, through systems in school and in the classroom, or by the support of parents/carers at home), the child should develop a holistic understanding of the relationship between learning and teaching. It is vital that learning in and out of school is seen as a coherent whole. Parents are partners in the learning process and have a crucial role to play.

Inclusion

St Joseph's is an inclusive school, guided by Gospel values expressed in our school's mission statement. These aims promote inclusive education in all areas of school life.

Children with Special Needs

St Joseph's School is committed to ensuring that all children have fair and equal access to the curriculum. Each child will be monitored and assessed to establish the level of support required and the best method of support. Teachers will consider pupil abilities and needs when planning lessons and activities, noting any targets set in Pupil Profiles. Additional learning support will be targeted to those requiring it, identified through formal and informal assessment and discussion with teacher, pupil, and parents. The SEND coordinator will oversee the provision and liaise with class teachers to ensure it complements and reinforces classwork, providing a framework of support for teacher, pupil, and parent. Comprehensive details of SEND provision can be found in the SEND Policy.

Children with Marked Aptitudes

At St Joseph's, we recognise that each pupil and teacher is a unique human created in God's likeness, each with their own special gifts and abilities. Within lessons, we aim to provide opportunities for pupils to use and develop these gifts and abilities further. Some pupils can be identified as having marked aptitudes. In line with the school's inclusive ethos, the needs of these pupils also need to be addressed and supported through appropriate activities that provide opportunities for children to demonstrate greater depth within a subject. This may be through cross-curricular links to other subjects or through using prior knowledge and skills independently, for example.

Teaching Strategies

- Whole class teaching
- Group work teaching with children of comparable ability
- Friendship groups
- Teacher-directed mixed ability groups
- Groups of pupils with the same preferred learning style
- Peer support groups
- Paired work teaching
- Individual teaching

Any of these can be successful, either in isolation or by varying the strategies throughout a lesson or session.

Teaching Techniques

At St Joseph's, we have a creative approach to teaching and learning. All teaching will be structured to maximise learning opportunities, and lessons will be planned in accordance with the following principles:

- The teaching should build on previous learning.

- There is an emphasis on developing children's oracy skills and vocabulary.
- It should give pupils the 'big picture' of the lesson.
- The teacher should explain what the children are learning about.
- The lesson should be presented in a range of styles.
- It should allow opportunities for pupils to build their understanding through various activities.
- It should allow opportunities for children to review what has been learned.
- It should have built-in opportunities for feedback to the children, celebrating success and reviewing learning strategies.
- The teaching should indicate the next step in the learning process.

Teaching and Learning strategies

We have developed staff CPD sessions that focus on Rosenshine's principles of instruction:

We have reflected on how these support our planning so that all learners are supported and reach their potential. The CPD sessions use the 'Walk Thru' techniques. A professional development programme built using WalkThrus is supported by:

- Evidence from cognitive science which provides a clear model for learning
- Evidence from the study of effective professional development. The materials used draw on the work of prominent researchers and cognitive scientists including Dylan Wiliam, Barak Rosenshine, Dan Willingham, Graham Nuthall and Efrat Furst. Their ideas are summarised in section WalkThrus. The simplified model of learning informs all of our key teaching techniques.

Integrating Metacognition

Planning:

- Teachers will guide students in setting specific, achievable goals for their learning.
- Lessons will include opportunities for pupils to plan how they will approach tasks and assignments.
- Pupils will be encouraged to think about the strategies they will use before beginning a task.
- Planning must be focused: Pupils will need to focus hard on the important knowledge, skills and concepts they need to learn. This means teachers' need to plan tasks that focus pupils on these knowledge, skills and concepts.
- Start with what they know: Pupils understand new ideas in relation to what they already know. This means teachers' planning will therefore need to start with what pupils know and build from this prior knowledge.
- Consider cognitive load: Pupils' working memories may be easily overloaded with new ideas. This means teachers will need to consider the cognitive load they are placing on pupils and plan to break down new material when introducing it.
- Develop fluency: Pupils need to return to important content and practise applying it if they are to understand it deeply and develop fluency. This means teachers need to plan to revisit important content and plan plenty of time for pupils to practise applying it.

Monitoring:

- Teachers will model how to monitor understanding and progress during a lesson.
- Pupils will be taught to ask themselves questions such as, "Do I understand this?" and "What can I do if I don't?"
- Regular check-ins and formative assessments will help pupils monitor their learning.
- **Match expertise to support:** Once pupils have a better mental model in an area, they will need less support from the teacher. This means teachers need to continually check what pupils understand and reduce or remove support accordingly, matching support to pupils' levels of expertise.

Evaluating:

- Pupils will be encouraged to reflect on what they have learned and how they have learned it.
- Teachers will provide opportunities for pupils to assess their work and identify areas for improvement.
- Reflection activities, such as learning journals or group discussions, will be incorporated into the curriculum.

The Classroom Environment

To achieve our aims, we consider the quality of the environment, effective use of space, resources, time, and people. The beginning of each term is a time to instruct pupils in classroom organisation, behaviour in class, and around the school. Expectations need to be reinforced frequently, and all staff are expected to be responsible for whole-school involvement, not just their class. Keeping systems on track requires whole-school ownership. School rules are displayed in appropriate places around the school. These will need constant reinforcement during the year. We must expect the standards to be met by everyone, and anyone failing to achieve them must be given the opportunity to try again.

The House Point and Prayers of Thanksgiving Assembly systems should be used as a reward for those pupils who are making efforts to be self-disciplined and courteous. The School's Mission Statement should be prominently displayed and used to reinforce good behaviour. Within the Prayers of Thanksgiving Assembly each term, a number of children will receive a Virtues award if they have consistently demonstrated the Virtues that have been a key focus that half-term. A Pupil of the Month award is also given to those who have shown exceptional behaviour and attitude towards their learning.

Strategies for Ensuring Progress and Continuity

1. **Planning:**
 - The National Curriculum provides the foundation for planning.
 - Plans are drawn up by class teachers and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Subject Leaders.
 - PPTs are created by individual teachers, ensuring progression and coverage.
2. **Assessment:**
 - Teachers use assessment to inform planning and ensure progress.
 - Regular formative assessments and summative assessments at key points.
 - Pupil progress meetings with SLT to track progress and identify support needed.
3. **Monitoring and Evaluation:**
 - SLT monitors planning, teaching, and learning through observations, book scrutiny, and pupil interviews.
 - Peer observations and sharing best practices among staff.
4. **Professional Development:**
 - Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers to stay updated on best practices and new teaching strategies.
 - In-house training and external courses.

The role of the Local Governing Body

Our Local Governing Body determine, support, monitor and review the school's approach to 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 used optimally to support teaching and learning
- check teaching methods in the light of health and safety regulations
- seek to ensure that our staff development and our performance management both promote good-quality teaching
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning approaches through the school's self-review processes, the Executive Principal's report to Local Governing Body, and a review of the in-service training sessions attended by staff

The role of parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents and carers about what and how their children are learning:

- by holding parents' evenings
- by sending information to parents and carers, at the start of each term, which outlines the topics that the children will be studying during that term at school
- by sending parents and carers midterm reports in which we explain the progress made by each child, and indicate how the child can improve further
- by explaining to parents and carers how they can support their children with homework, and suggesting, for example, regular shared reading with very young children, and support for older children with their projects and investigative work
- by holding various workshops / curriculum presentations throughout the year to invite parents in to work with their child during a lesson

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

- to ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible
- to ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit;
- to do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school
- to inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour
- to promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general
- to support learning at home and the promotion of reading, homework and extra learning opportunities; to fulfil the requirements set out in the home–school agreement

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to providing a rich, varied, and inclusive learning environment that promotes the development of independent, confident, and resilient learners. Our approach integrates metacognitive techniques to empower pupils to take ownership of their learning, supported by a coherent framework that involves teachers, pupils, and parents working collaboratively. We aim to foster an environment where every child can achieve their full potential and develop into positive and responsible citizens.

Monitoring and review

We are aware of the need to monitor the school's teaching and learning policy, and to review it regularly, so that we can take account of new initiatives and research, changes in the curriculum developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. We will therefore review this policy every two years or earlier if necessary.

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