



St Mary and St John Church of England Primary School

'Let all that you do be done in love.'
1 Corinthians 16:14'

Teaching and Learning Policy

Our Vision

As a Church of England Primary School, we are committed to making St Mary & St John an inclusive environment, fostering curiosity, spirituality, creativity and respect. At our school we want everyone to feel valued, to explore the joy of learning, and to be the best that we can be.

Introduction

At St Mary and St John CE Primary School 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. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences, underpinned by our core Christian values, help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

Aims and objectives

At St Mary and St John CE Primary School, the ECM agenda is central to our practice. (see appendix 1). We aim to provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows all children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential, irrespective of socio-economic background, ethnicity, gender or creed.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring, independent and reflective learners
- foster children's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people
- 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
- show respect and understanding for all learners (including those with special educational needs) and encourage and include all pupils in all activities in so far as it is possible.
- enable children to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of this community
- enable children to grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.

Effective teaching and learning

Personalised learning is at the heart of effective teaching and learning. At St Mary and St John, we recognise the need to develop strategies that will allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them so that they may fulfill their potential. Many learning opportunities are made available to the children that take account of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles.

Such opportunities include:

- investigation and problem solving
- research and finding out
- group work
- paired work
- independent work
- whole-class work
- asking and answering questions
- use of IT
- a range of experiences - fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest
- visitors
- creative activities
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations
- designing and making things
- participation in athletic or physical activity
- outdoor learning

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. (AFL)

Effective teaching and learning is characterised by the nine features of Personalised Learning;-

1. 'Quality first' teaching and learning
2. Target setting and tracking
3. Focused assessment
4. Intervention
5. Pupil grouping
6. The learning environment
7. Curriculum organisation
8. The extended curriculum
9. Supporting children's wider needs

1. 'Quality first' teaching and learning

This is characterised by:

- Highly focused lesson design with sharp objectives
- High expectations of pupil involvement and engagement with their learning
- High levels of interaction for all pupils
- Teacher questioning, modelling and explaining
- An emphasis on learning through dialogue, with regular opportunities for pupils to talk individually and in groups
- An expectation that pupils will accept responsibility for their own learning and work independently
- Praise and encouragement to motivate pupils further

2. Target setting and tracking

Individual pupils' progress is tracked, together with that of cohorts and specific groups throughout the school. We use a range of performance measures including teacher assessment (against NC and small step descriptors) and test results. Strengths and areas for development are identified to inform planning and to implement intervention programmes as appropriate. Data is collected on a regular basis and is shared with the staff and pupils.

- Pupil progress is managed through a whole-school Oxfordshire Pupil Tracker program (OPT).
- Pupil progress meetings are held termly to identify strengths/weaknesses in performance and/or identify CPD requirements.
- Pupil voice is central to target setting and the review of performance and target setting.
- Parents/carers receive regular updates on their child's progress so that they can provide support/encouragement as appropriate
- Curriculum leaders monitor pupil progress through regular lesson observations, pupil interviews, work and planning scrutiny.

3. Focused assessment

Secure knowledge of each pupil's current progress is a core element of teaching and learning at St Mary and St John. Lesson planning is based on prior learning and throughout the learning process: active assessment is required to ensure that the expected rate of progress is being made.

Fundamental to our formative assessment procedures is Assessment for Learning (AfL).

A range of AfL strategies are used in the classroom:-

- Learning objectives are made explicit and shared with the pupils.
- Success criteria are agreed by the pupils and teacher.
- Self and peer assessment is used against the success criteria.
- Pupils are engaged in their learning and receive immediate feedback on their progress.
- Summative assessment opportunities are detailed in the assessment calendar. These include optional and end of KS tests and standardised tests in spelling and reading.
- Regular continuous assessment is central to teaching and learning practice, including EYFS Baseline Assessment, EYFS Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals.

4. Intervention

It is anticipated that the great majority of pupils at St Mary and St John will make at least the expected rate of progress through first quality, class based teaching. However, for some pupils this approach may not be sufficient and these pupils, at various stages, may benefit from additional intervention programmes to enable them to make the progress required to achieve their full potential.

Central to the effective planning of an intervention programme is the knowledge the teacher has of a particular pupil or groups of pupils. When considering pupils for interventions, a wide range of assessment evidence is drawn upon to support judgements made about pupil progress.

5. Pupil Grouping

All classes are mixed ability. In order to meet the learning objectives and learning needs and provide appropriate challenge and support for all pupils, teachers use a range of grouping options across the year group and within their classes.

- skills based grouping (guided reading/writing)
- paired work (response partners) to facilitate discussion
- individual work

- pupil choice
- whole class groups

6. The Learning Environment

Our classrooms are attractive learning environments. Displays are changed regularly, to ensure that the classroom reflects the topics studied by the children. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display their best work at some time during the year. Highly visual and interactive displays, learning walls for example, are used to engage pupils and encourage self-help strategies.

All classrooms are extremely well resourced (each room containing an interactive whiteboard, classroom computer with internet access, class libraries of fiction and non-fiction books etc) facilitating a wide range of different teaching and learning activities.

We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning, and an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources and high-quality work by the children.

Creative use of internal space has provided areas for intervention work and increasingly, external spaces are being used to provide outdoor learning.

In Foundation Stage, we provide an 'enabling environment', both indoors and outdoors, that allows access for parents/carers to enter and settle their child. The learning environment is designed to encourage Foundation Stage children to move freely between areas, both inside and outside.

7. Curriculum Rationale

Our vision is central to the curriculum at St Mary and St John, linking why and how we teach, to provide positive outcomes for all children.

Intent of St Mary and St John's Curriculum

- Engages children in memorable learning experiences which encourage, stretch and support them on their journey to realise their full potential.
- Accessible for all children, providing opportunities for discussion, exploration and risk taking.

Implementation of St Mary and St John's Curriculum

- Sequencing of lessons provides small steps in learning which build on prior learning experiences, allowing children to make cross-curricular links.
- Lessons balance skills and knowledge.
- Meaningful experiences in learning provide rich learning opportunities.
- Understanding there is no ceiling on learning, having high expectations for all children.

Impact of St Mary and St John's Curriculum

- Establish a sense of belonging to the school and community with an ability to respect the rights of, and be inclusive of, others.
- Children make connections in their learning.
- Children succeed in their learning, no matter their starting point and develop a life-long love of learning.
- Children are resilient, feeling confident and safe to take risks.
- Children make meaningful, positive relationships, with both adults and children.

8. Curriculum Organisation

We use the National Curriculum 2014 and the Primary Framework to guide our teaching. These set out the aims and objectives and detail what is to be taught in each year group. Our medium and short term lesson plans contain detailed information about the teaching activities and tasks to be set, the resources needed, and the type of assessment to be used.

In personalising the curriculum, we aim to find appropriate challenges for pupils and address their particular needs so that they may all have an equal opportunity to succeed. We aim to cater for the needs and interests of a full range of learners including:

- the gifted and talented
- learners entitled to free school meals
- learners with learning difficulties and disabilities
- learners with English as an additional language
- girls and boys
- looked after children
- learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

9. The Extended Curriculum

Helping pupils to discover and/or develop new interests is essential to personalised learning at St Mary and St John CE Primary School. During the school year a range of activities is organised to enhance the curriculum:

- Residential visits
- Clubs
- Visits
- Visitors

This approach extends beyond school hours. The school hosts a number of community activities such as the Community swimming pool, Craft weekend, fitness classes and summer sports courses.

We ensure that all tasks and activities that the children do are safe. When we plan to take children out of school, we first inform parents and obtain their permission. In so doing, we follow the LA guidance on Off-Site visits and volunteers. We have a named Educational Visits Leader.

10. Supporting children's wider needs

Schools that can identify barriers to learning beyond the classroom and address them are in a strong position to provide personalised learning for individual pupils. At St Mary and St John, we aim to establish good relationships with all our families and to provide a climate open to dialogue. Within school, we can offer advice and support through our school-based services, for example:

- Our SENDCo
- Educational Psychologist visits
- SALT
- Play Therapy
- Visits from the School Nursing Team
- Occupational Therapy
- Communication and Interaction

- CLN (Complex Learning Needs)

Where additional support from other agencies is required, a 'team around the child' approach may be needed. St Mary and St John uses the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to identify barriers to learning and as a result, TAC meetings, involving a range of multi-agency professionals, are set up by a Lead Professional.

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 helping to allocate resources effectively
- ensure that the school buildings and premises promote successful teaching and learning
- ensure that high quality staff are appointed
- monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment through link visits to the school and in consultation with subject leaders
- ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching and learning
- Monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning policies through the school self-review processes. These include reports from subject leaders and the half-termly head teacher's report to governors as well as a review of the in-service training sessions attended by our staff.

The role of the school

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn.

We inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- holding curriculum presentations to explain our school strategies for teaching the National Curriculum;
- Communicating the curriculum via the website to parents at the start of each term, outlining the curriculum that the children will be studying during that term at school;
- sending annual 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. We suggest, for example, regular shared reading with very young children, and support for older children with their projects and/or investigative work.
- Holding parents' evenings which provide an opportunity to discuss progress children are making.

The role of Parents

We believe that parents, as their child's primary educator, have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. Parents have a responsibility 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
- ensure that their child is supported with homework activities which consolidate learning
- inform us of their child's interests and capabilities
- 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
- fulfil the requirements set out in the home/school agreement.

The role of the child

We believe that the child has a responsibility to:

- participate as fully as possible in the learning opportunities and help other children to do the same
- work hard and try their best
- behave appropriately in school according to the school's behaviour code
- be polite and helpful to other pupils and adults in school
- come to school regularly and be on time
- talk at home about what they have learnt at school
- take good care of the school environment
- do the homework regularly and bring it back to school
- wear the correct school uniform
- tell the teacher or an adult at home if they find the work difficult

Monitoring and review

All our teachers reflect on their strengths/areas for development and their professional development needs are planned for accordingly. We provide internal and external guidance to support our teachers in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding so that they can continually improve their practice.

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.

Appendix 1

The Every Child Matters (ECM) green paper identified the five outcomes that are most important to children and young people:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being
- The five outcomes are universal ambitions for every child and young person, whatever their background or circumstances.

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