St Catherine's Catholic Primary School

"Loving and Learning Together as Jesus taught us"

Curriculum

Teaching & Learning Policy

Date of policy review: **November 2024**

Next review: November 2026

Policy Reviewed & Passed by the Governors

Key Person Responsible: Maureen Kelly

"Loving and Learning together as Jesus taught us"

In the St. Catherine's we aim to develop to the fullest possible extent the whole person, socially, emotionally, creatively, academically, physically and spiritually.

We believe that our first aim as teachers is to encourage in all children the knowledge of and love of God and a concern and care for others. Every child in our care is valued for who and what they are and that means that we will make every effort to become informed about their ethnic background, their culture, their concerns, their experiences and their interests.

At St Catherine's Primary School we aim to

- Provide children with a high quality education; our Catholic values and a positive ethos are at the core of the school.
- Develop every child's full potential and strive for the achievements of high standards.
- Provide a safe, welcoming environment where everyone feels valued.
- Nurture the personal, social and spiritual development of individuals into caring and responsible people.
- Encourage excellent behaviour within a framework of mutual trust and respect.
- Promote independence, encouraging children to take responsibility for their learning and behaviour.
- Promote strong links between school, home and community.

Our Curriculum Intent

We provide our children with an ambitious, broad, rich curriculum that develops their understanding and skills. It is taught in a relevant context so that it builds on individuals' real-life experiences, which results in high levels of engagement and active learning. Because of their starting points children at St Catherine's need to be flooded with language and speaking and listening opportunities immediately, to address the gaps in their vocabulary and communication skills. Children at St Catherine's are expected to behave with consistently high levels of respect for others, and demonstrate outstanding behaviours for learning. They leave St Catherine's having made a tangible contribution to the life of the school and the wider community and have a strong commitment to becoming valued, caring members of society where British Values guides their actions and behaviour.

Our curriculum plan is ambitious for all our children. We use a range of schemes of work, best suited to each subject. However, a common component of our curriculum is that it is taught in a logical progression, systematically and explicitly enough for all pupils to acquire the intended knowledge and skills. We believe the focus we have on reading and fluency, alongside proficient language development strategies we carry out is the key to unlocking the rest of the academic curriculum for all our children including those who are disadvantaged and have SEND. As a result of this our children including our disadvantaged and SEND pupils meet or exceed their targets

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 are best used to support successful teaching and learning;
• monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment through link visits to the school;
• ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching and learning;

Teaching and Learning
Highly effective teaching and learning at St Catherine's is characterised by personalisation. Our primary objective is to engender in the children a love of learning, an eagerness for knowledge and a delight in exploration of the world around them. We know that children will make the best progress when they are encouraged and when any effort however small is noticed and praised. We want them to feel secure and confident enough to take risks and 'have a go'.

Learning Strategies and styles
There are a range of learning strategies identified by the staff through structured and free play, through a balance of open ended and closed tasks, by exploration and experimentation, through independent and directed learning, through trial and error, through first-hand experience, through imitation, and many more.
Teachers plan and teach, considering the learning styles of the pupils in order to maximise learning potential. We recognise the variety of learning styles that all pupils deploy to varying degrees- visual, aural and kinaesthetic.

To meet the needs of each child we effectively include every child in consistently high-quality personalised teaching. This includes:

- Sharp and clear lesson objectives
- A shared understanding of the learning 'destination' from individual to class level
- High expectations of child involvement
- Appropriate questioning, modelling and explaining on the part of the teacher
- Emphasis on learning through dialogue using appropriate vocabulary and sentence structure
- Frequent use of authentic and specific praise
- Scaffolding, such as word banks, example texts and sentence starters for all children to assist them in achieving the task independently
- Maximum use of visual and kinaesthetic as well as auditory/visual learning

Growth Mindset
We follow a Growth Mindset approach at St Catherine's where everyone – children and adults – move along their learning journey. We follow the Growth Mindset idea "the only way to progress" is to make a real effort in all areas of learning. We do that by challenging ourselves. All the staff and children challenge themselves and each other.
Children are encouraged to try and constantly strive to be better and to not settle for second best. Pupils review their own and each other's learning, they recognise what went well and identify what they could do even better or challenge themselves further, next time. Every child is encouraged to have a go, try something new, and try hard to succeed. Children are constantly challenged through the use of 3 types of activities which reflect a certain level of challenge. The children choose the level

of challenge they want to carry out. Children are not grouped by ability and every child can choose the level of challenge that is right for them. This is monitored very carefully by the class teacher and teaching assistant.

Our Growth Mindset Culture includes:

- Recognition that we use our 'Learning muscles' to help us challenge ourselves and achieve.
- An emphasis on self -reflection and evaluation through the use of self-assessment
- A continuous dialogue between teachers and pupils that promotes an awareness in pupils of how they are progressing and what they can do to progress even further
- The use of Green Pen Questions so that children can evaluate, edit, improve and extend their learning
- Purple means progress – the use of purple pens for children to edit and improve their work making progress and improvement visible
- The use of 3 types of activities to enable pupils to choose their own level of challenge
- The use of Talk Partners to encourage discussion and give 'talking time'
- No hands up – the use of lolly sticks to select children to answer question in class

To ensure learning is personalised for each child we ensure there is significant dialogue between teachers, support staff and the leadership team on the progress each child is making and how they learn best. Teaching & Learning is monitored by the SLT through, pupil discussions, book scrutinies, class room displays, pupil progress meetings and learning visits.

Inclusion

We identify the particular needs of a child as soon as possible. We have access to guidance and assessment from a range of agencies. The Inclusion Leader facilitates this support but we are passionate in our belief that EVERY teacher is a teacher of children with special educational needs. Our Pupil Premium children are identified as early as possible by developing positive relationships with families. Class teachers target this particular group of children with extra time to read to an adult. They also ensure this group of children are exposed to a range of cultural learning experiences many non-pupil premium have such as trips to the beach, museums, theatres and parks so that they are able to develop a cultural knowledge which helps them to navigate culture which in turns alters their experiences and the opportunities available to them.

Teachers are aware that providing opportunities for talk is central to effective learning. Acquiring understanding of any concept requires dialogue on a number of levels – with a learning partner, small group and as part of whole class interaction. All pupils benefit from opportunities to rework and rehearse their understandings and explanations and use key vocabulary before more formal presentation. There is also an insistence that children speak to staff in full sentences using correct English. We believe this "talk" approach is an effective tool to help children develop metacognition where they become more aware of themselves as a learner enabling them to purposely direct their thinking and learning.

Differentiation and Groupings

All the children are in mixed ability groups but in certain subjects, principally guided reading and some areas of maths, the children sometimes work with others of a similar level. These groupings are flexible and take into account successful learning partners, personalities, progress etc.

Children learn differently and typically they will need to learn a concept or acquire knowledge in a different way to some of the other children in their class. To provide for the range of ability in the class and the learning needs of the pupils, teachers modify tasks and provision in the following ways

- Offering a different activity to the child to suit their learning style but still providing the same learning objective and level of challenge

- Offering or supporting the child with specific resources eg writing frames or word banks to reach an objective
- Providing the children with open ended opportunities and assessing the variety of outcomes
- Grouping children in such a way as to support or accelerate learning taking into account personalities and abilities.
- Providing all children with scaffolding resources to develop independence and a greater chance of achieving the learning objective.

Planning

Long term planning and curriculum framework

Our planning ensures effective, efficient and creative delivery of the National Curriculum and The Practice Guidance for Early Years Foundation Stage. A St Catherine's contextualised curriculum has been designed to encompass a range of subjects and the development of skills. Some subjects are taught discreetly such as RE, Music, PSHE, PE, French and Maths as oppose to being Topic based. All curriculum maps are shared with parents at the beginning of the year in the Curriculum Meetings with the class teacher and are on the school website.

Medium term and short term planning

Our medium term plans are an overview of the expected skills to be taught each term. These are on Teams for each year group.

A range of resources are used such as Cornerstones for Geography, History Art & DT, The Way the Truth & the Life / The Vine and the Branches (RE) White Rose (Maths) Complete PE, Angel Solutions (French) Ten Ten (PSHE) No Nonsense for Spelling and No Nonsense for Grammar Solutions and Little Wandle (phonics) to support the planning and delivery. Plans incorporate the children's interests and are supplemented with a variety of resources to ensure the National Curriculum objectives are taught in their entirety. Each subject has been contextualised to meet the needs of St Catherine's learners to create a St Catherine's curriculum.

Effective short term planning:

Short term planning are the weekly slides for every class for each subject. This is to be stored on Teams in a weekly planning folder for each term.

The files must be saved on Teams in Teaching and Learning, Planning, 2023-2024 then year group, then term, then subject.

Each folder must contain:

- the slides for every subject/lesson, (which must include the learning objective and the steps to success)
- A range of open / challenging questions ensuring there are a range of lower and higher order questions
- Scaffolding
- the resources used eg, writing frames, photographs, pictures/ videos. Resources can be attached to Smart Note book where appropriate.
- Opportunities throughout the lesson for assessment for learning
- Evidence of visualiser being used to support learning

Teachers should

- Ensure plans have clear learning objectives outlining potential steps to success.
- Ensure steps to success criteria are evident.
- Recognise and provide learning opportunities for the range of needs and abilities within the class especially our disadvantaged.
- Recognise and provide access to challenging activities for our SEND learners and our higher learners. (Scaffolding)
- Take into account a range of teaching styles to reflect children's different learning styles.
- The spelling rule or pattern that the children are learning that week
- Ensure the learning environment maximises learning opportunities
- Take into account and build upon previous learning.
- Plan assessment activities including daily assessment for learning strategies.
- Ensure plans are adapted in light of daily pupil achievement.
- Identify opportunities to embed ICT.
- Identify related home learning activities.
- Plan and create regular opportunities for children to have real life "cultural capital" experiences together

Sharing Learning Objectives and Success Criteria

The sharing of learning objectives is a crucial element in the process of teaching and learning. By sharing the objective, we empower children to take ownership of their learning.

We ensure:

- Learning objectives of a lesson are clear, and new vocabulary is explained and understood.
- Children understand the purpose of their learning (The Big Picture).
- Task instructions are clearly separated from the learning objective.
- There are clear steps to success, which are discussed and agreed between the children and their teacher.
- Learning objectives and steps to success are visually displayed where appropriate and referred to, except in those lessons where they are to be 'discovered'.
- Learning objectives provide the focus for the teacher to evaluate to what extent the lesson met its aims.
- Learning objectives provide the focus for peer/self-evaluation (and marking).

Learning objectives often begin with: We are learning:

to know …	(knowledge: factual information)
to be able to …	(skills: using knowledge and resources)
to understand …	(concepts: understanding reasons and how things work)
to be aware …	(attitude: empathy, awareness of issues)

The purpose of the steps to success is to enable teachers and children to be sure how to judge whether or not the learning objectives have been met. If the learning objective is seen as the 'house', then the success criteria are the 'bricks' used to build the house.

Success criteria are often phrased:
What I am looking for is …
I will know you have been successful if …
Remember to …
Steps to success are shared, discussed, and agreed with pupils. They are appropriately differentiated to ensure all pupils can make progress towards the learning objective and there is challenge for all learners. Steps to success are used as a basis for the evaluation of the lesson by the teacher and children. This forms part of key questioning, plenaries and the following lesson introduction.

Effective Questioning
We recognise that skilful and well-planned questions are crucial to effective teaching, learning and assessment. Our questions focus children's thinking on the key points. Teachers and others adults model good questioning to help and encourage children to ask their own questions and to further or clarify their learning and understanding. Effective questions can help to move children from the concrete and factual towards the analytical and evaluative.
There are two main types of questions:

- Closed questions: these imply that the teacher has a predetermined 'correct' answer in mind, and are a useful means of making on the spot assessments.
- Open questions: allow for a range of answers and can encourage children to think beyond the literal.

It is important that we support children in responding to questions:

- Allowing 'thinking time' after each question ensures children have time to think through their response.
- Giving children the opportunity to discuss their ideas briefly with another child or adult (carpet buddies/talk partners, who are changed on a weekly basis) can help them to rehearse their responses, and to feel more confident and prepared.
- By using lolly sticks or similar methods to randomly select children to answer.
- By encouraging children to listen and provide evidence for their views or opinions.

Use of support staff
The role of support staff is to support the children's learning and ensure, together with the class teacher, that they make progress. The teacher manages the adults and engages them in tasks that optimise the quality of learning in the lesson. The key role of other adults in the classroom is to enable pupils to participate effectively in the lesson. Prior to the lesson the teacher will brief support staff so that they are aware of:
the key outcomes
the key vocabulary
the child or group with whom s/he will work
the outcomes which apply to those pupils
the nature of the activity to be undertaken, including pre teaching vocabulary, key questions and recording
accurate feed back and make suggestions for future learning.

Parents

We see our parents as partners with us in the education of the child. We believe that when parents and teachers work together to support children's learning the effect on their learning is marked and measurable. To be successful this partnership needs to offer opportunities for knowledge, expertise and information to flow both ways.

Home Learning

With this in mind we ask for parents to support their children at home with their reading and their mental arithmetic. Supporting children with their reading and their understanding of the text should ideally be carried out every night even if the child is a competent reader. Discussing what has been read and asking questions helps children to develop their inference and the knowledge of language. The teachers will send home information each week via text or email on what the children are learning in lessons that week. Parents are asked to support this learning with practical activities at home so that children can develop their understanding in a real life context. In Year 6 children will be given homework every night starting in the Spring Term. This is to prepare them for their SATs and to build their stamina for their transition to secondary school.

The Learning Environment

Children spend a significant amount of their lives in our classrooms. They should be both safe and calm places to be, as well worlds of curiosity. The environment in which the children learn is:

- Colourful and stimulating
- Displays that celebrates children's best work, and offer stimulating, up to date topic information
- Offers prompts and reminders for independent learning
- Emotional registers Nursery to Year 3 and Suggestion Box Year 4 to 6
- Neat and well-ordered as a model for the neatness and order we expect from children
- Organised so as to create a calm, harmonious working environment
- Learning resources are introduced and deployed in order to maximise learning potential. They are organised in such a way as to ensure that they are easily accessible
- The classroom must be interactive and engaging and provide an atmosphere where high standards can be achieved by all who learn there

Conclusion

This policy for Teaching and Learning reflects the consensus of the whole teaching staff, and has the full support of the Governing Body. The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of all the teaching staff, support staff and the Headteacher.

Reviewed: October 2023

To be reviewed again: November 2024

Appendix A

St Catherine's 21st Century Learning Environment

Furniture Layout

Furniture is laid out in order to maximise learning potential; and a range of possible configurations are used. Using Stephen Heppell's approach to learning environments and our endeavour to provide children with a personalised learning experience, the children in KS2 have contributed to the design of the learning environment including the type of furniture they wanted to have in two classrooms where they can choose what area they want to carry out their learning activity. A feature of the classrooms are the high tables and chairs along with brightly coloured soft stools and group seating which provides children with breakout spaces, spaces for focus, areas for collaboration, for serious study and focussed conversations as well as areas for peace and quiet. This allows the children to learn in a larger, free flow space between two classrooms and develop independence in their learning whilst providing an eye line for the adults in the room to monitor learning and engagement.

The learning environment enables all learners to

- maximise the space available for effective teaching and learning
- enable children to gain access to resources efficiently and safely
- optimise learning by offering the most suitable group configuration
- allow people to move through the classroom safely

Shoeless Learning

In Key Stage 2 children remove their shoes when entering the classroom for shoeless learning. This strategy encourages better learning and better behaviour. Noise is reduced creating a calmer learning atmosphere where children are more likely to move gently throughout the classroom. Children are more receptive to learning as they are comfortable with this "more like home" effect and are more willing to curl up with a book to read or stretch out and write or research on the I pad, rather than sit upright in a hard chair.

Tiered Seating

Tiered seating provides children with the opportunity to come together comfortably as a group. This enables children to be heard by everyone in the room. By allowing children to come together and sit close in front of the teacher or whoever is presenting an imitate space is provided where voices are not raised and eye contact can be made.

The layout is arranged to

- enable each pupil to see and be seen comfortably by the teacher
- allow pupils to work with adequate space
- allow pupils to move around the classroom without disturbing other children
- allow the teacher to gain adequate access to all pupils

Outside Learning

Outside learning is not just a feature in the Early Years. All classroom have access to an outside area where children can carry out activities on a larger scale. This is particularly effective for the kinaesthetic learner and those who require motor skills development. Activities provided in the classroom are mirrored as far as possible outside on a larger scale.

So what should a classroom of the 21st Century look like?

- Adaptable furniture - classrooms that move and change as the children like - classrooms that feel spacious and inviting. Different areas for children to learn in - 'rooms within rooms' i.e. quiet spaces - areas to go to when you're stuck, areas to collaborate etc.
- Technology integrated into the classroom and all curriculum areas - no more 'ICT suite'. It's always ICT time! Air Server and I-Pads
- Team Teaching - sharing and using expertise. Using the children and all staff. Being able to support all learners at all times. Sharing and using the different areas of the learning environment.
- The teachers as facilitators. Modern realisation of best practice in education no longer supports the idea of the teacher as an authoritarian figure standing in the front of the room scrawling on a board. As educators, our role can be reshaped so that we work beside students providing knowledge, intervention, challenge, support and encouragement.
- Children able to choose areas which they will work effectively in for different activities.