



CURRICULUM, TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT POLICY

November 2019

Signed.....COG

.....HEAD

Next review November 2022

Teaching and Learning Policy

Our Curriculum

At St Mary's we believe in the need for an engaging, knowledge-rich curriculum with skills interwoven throughout. Our curriculum encourages and nurtures children's self-belief, enthusiasm, independence, curiosity, resilience and emotional intelligence. We want our pupils to think creatively and with increasing independence, developing the learning skills, self-reliance and adaptability they will need to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

Our curriculum is designed annually in consultation with children and staff. Pupil voice is gathered through end-of-year surveys and discussions about projects. Children identify what they have enjoyed learning and what they would like to learn the following year which is taken account of at the next stage of design.

Next, teams of teachers work in phases to plan the curriculum, taking account of previous learning (evaluations/coverage/monitoring). This stage takes place as a whole-school planning event, utilising subject-leader expertise, prior knowledge of the curriculum, knowledge of cohorts and what the wider community has to offer. This planning stage results in the formation of a Curriculum Overview.

From Early Years Foundation Stage through to Year 6, children's learning is fostered through age-appropriate thematic blocks, with subject knowledge and skills being integrated in a meaningful way.

Children receive developmentally-appropriate English (including specific phonics teaching) and maths sessions during the day, for which teachers plan and assess learning with reference to the 2014 National Curriculum Orders and the EYFS Development Matters framework in Early Years.

Our curriculum is a holistic, integrated approach to learning. It is largely based on the objectives and coverage of the National Curriculum and EYFS Development Matters Framework, and becomes a series of learning opportunities for children to explore. Staff plan and assess children's learning in all other subjects against a continuum of skills, progressing from the Foundation Stage to Year 6.

We have represented our curriculum as a series of cogs. We liken the motion of the cog to our intent for learning, engaging children with subjects, supporting cross-curricular learning and using skills and knowledge from Hubs (see p.4) to drive forward learning.

We aim to engage children's interest in each project with a WOW activity, designed to engage children with their learning. A WOW day might be in the form of a trip or a visitor,

a series of collaborative challenges or an aspect of the project to be taught later on. We want our children to be excited to come to school and to have a passion for learning. These engaging WOW days give the children a flavour of what is to come.

Throughout each project children are working towards some form of presentation which will allow them to share some of their learning. Presentations may include assemblies, classroom galleries or exhibitions, drama productions and open afternoons.

Assessment

Staff plan and assess children's learning using a variety of strategies, progressing from the Foundation Stage to Year 6. Teacher assessments of each skill within a subject strand enables staff to assess children's attainment in relation to age-related expectations. Progress is plotted using Target Tracker. Alongside regular teacher assessments, standardised testing is used to support judgements and also to prepare children for statutory assessments. Information on pupil achievement is communicated to parents through two parents' evenings (November & March) and through 'formal' written reports at the end of each academic year.

Aims

Teachers:

- make learning vivid and real, actively engaging children in their learning
- develop understanding through enquiry, creativity, e-learning and group problem-solving
- make learning an enjoyable and challenging experience
- stimulate learning through matching teaching techniques and strategies to a range of learning styles. Work is well matched to the needs and abilities of individuals, providing variety, pace and challenge
- enrich the learning experience and build learning skills across the curriculum
- promote assessment for learning, and make children partners in their learning
- promote the use of interactive ICT to enrich and support learning opportunities
- use time and resources effectively, with TA's supporting children's learning and progress

Learning:

- children evaluate their work against agreed criteria and identify areas for improvement
- children use feedback to enable them to improve on their previous performance
- children have positive attitudes and behaviour is good. They collaborate well with each other
- children use independent learning and develop problem-solving skills

Curriculum Leadership and Monitoring

Curriculum subjects are organised into hub groups, with teams of teachers planning curriculum developments. Hub groups are responsible for the monitoring developments relating to planning, teaching and learning, feedback and assessment and monitoring, and these are reviewed annually and shared with all teaching staff.

Hub groups also have the responsibility for the monitoring of teaching and learning according to the Whole School Monitoring Schedule and ensuring compliance with the 2014 National Curriculum and the EYFS Development Matters Framework.

Governors monitor teaching and learning through:

- participation in the Whole School Monitoring Schedule
- meeting with hub groups and senior leaders
- observing teaching and learning in school
- scrutinising progress and attainment data
- evaluation of school performance against school development plan

Home – School Links

Our Curriculum Statement is available to view on the school website and class teachers publish termly curriculum overviews to inform parents of knowledge and skills coverage.

We encourage children and parents to support the learning in school through the Home-School Agreement, and through encouraging their child in learning enrichment and individual learning activities at home.

Appendices to Policy

The following documents should be considered integral to the Aims and Objectives of the main Policy document and used by all staff to ensure the consistent delivery of Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

Appendix 1

Classroom Planning Files – Non-Negotiables

The Purpose of Classroom Planning Files

Classroom Planning Files should:

- enable teachers to plan effective teaching and learning for all children in their class
- evidence teacher competency in planning to ensure children progress
- evidence teacher competency in adapting teaching methods and approaches to meet the needs of all learners
- provide a consistent means of monitoring teaching and learning
- demonstrate consistent knowledge and skills progression across the school.
- be available and up to date at all times

Organisation

Teachers maintain a Planning File that identifies the intent and reflects the implementation of the curriculum through teachable moments/annotations of the planning. Where a class is shared between teachers, both have responsibility for the same Planning File.

Project Planning

This document is subject-specific and identifies the objectives to be covered, the vocabulary to be taught, the questions that will be asked and the intended outcomes for ability-groups of children with each project.

The Project Planner is a working document and evaluations of each project influence next steps in terms of curriculum design and other projects planned for the year.

English and Maths Planning

English and maths planning should be completed weekly, and daily English and maths lessons should be evident. Teachers may deviate from this if blocking project work or other activities such as WOW days, trips etc. However, this will be clearly demonstrated in the planning.

Completed, annotated plans should be added to the Planning File on a weekly basis.

Appendix 2

Feedback, Marking and Assessment

Non-Negotiables 2019

Good and better teachers need to perform good and better assessment in order to support children's progress appropriately.

Though it is recognised (and welcomed) that individual teachers may choose to use additional marking and feedback strategies within their own classrooms, the following make up the minimum expectations around feedback, marking and assessment in all subject areas.

Feedback and Marking

EYFS

Record of achievements should be annotated with next steps where available and applicable

YEARS 1-6

To enable effective feedback and marking, all work recorded in children's books should be clearly dated and include a WALT (We Are Learning Today).

- When marking work, teachers highlight in pink when something is achieved and green when something has not been achieved.
- When marking, teachers should make reference to progress made, linked to the WALT, and indicate next steps.
- All class teachers should have an AfL strategy appropriate to, agreed with and understood by the children in their class, which allows children to record their own self-assessment or understanding, linked to the WALT.
- At the completion of units of work (as defined by teachers in individual subject areas) class teachers should provide an opportunity for each child to assess their own achievement against relevant success criteria, and share their own overall assessment with the child.
- The purpose of all marking and feedback is to inform children of the learning that has taken place and their own next steps for learning.

Progress Tracking

- Short-term plans for English and maths and Project Planners must be annotated to show learning evaluations and outcomes, assessment of individuals and next steps for learning. Notes on SEN children must also be included.

Appendix 3

Handwriting Non-Negotiables

At St Mary's, all children are introduced to Cursive Handwriting from Year 1. We believe this raises standards in handwriting throughout the whole school, developing confidence, accuracy, fluency and improved presentation.

All pupils will be expected to:

- produce clear, concise, legible handwriting
- neatly present work to a variety of audiences
- develop accuracy and fluency
- recognise that handwriting is a form of communication and as such should be considered important in order for it to be effective
- take pride in their work and present it neatly

Below is an outline of the non-negotiable expectations at different stages throughout school.

EYFS

On entry at the Foundation Stage, children will be:

- involved in a variety of activities to develop essential pre-writing skills in line with the Statutory Framework for EYFS, Development Matters Curriculum Guidance and the Early Learning Goals
- encouraged to work towards a tripod grip
- given activities to develop their gross and fine motor control
- introduced to non-cursive letter formation in conjunction with the introduction of phonic skills
- taught where and how to start each of the letters, which will support the introduction of cursive script later, where the addition of a uniform leading line can be added with ease
- use handwriting patterns to promote the use of cursive script

Parents are given a copy of the correct letter formation and Cursive Style alphabet posters at the New Parents meeting held in the Autumn term.

Year 1

As children move to Year 1 they are more formally introduced to cursive letter formation.

Children will:

- be shown how to start every letter on the line with an entry stroke and lead out with an exit stroke
- be introduced to leading lines on individual letters in groups of similarly formed letters
- have all cursive letters displayed in the classroom as a visual reminder
- practise in short, regular sessions
- have opportunities for a multi- sensory approach to learning cursive handwriting
- write in pencil
- be expected to use the cursive letters they have learnt in all other written work
- be shown how to use the individual leading lines to join pairs and groups of letters when appropriate

Years 2-6

As children move through school, they will be expected to:

- take part in regular handwriting practice sessions
- develop an effective and efficient pencil hold
- develop the habit of concentration, which is crucial to good handwriting
- develop neatness and legibility
- use cursive script with increasing accuracy and speed
- present all their work to a high standard and with consistent use of cursive script

In recognition of a consistently high standard of presentation and cursive handwriting, children in Year 5 and 6 may be presented with a 'Pen Award' and be allowed to complete their work in pen.

Appendix 4

Learning at Home

There is an expectation on schools to set all pupils regular homework suitable to their age.

At St Mary's we recognise that children learn best when both school and family work in partnership to promote a child's learning and progress. This partnership includes encouraging children to practise, develop and enrich the learning that takes place both in school and outside of school. Homework should not be something that leads to arguments, tears or tantrums for either children or parents.

Our homework enables all pupils to make sure they have chance to practise and recall things like spellings and times tables, to read regularly and also to complete a weekly piece of work for maths, English and Project.

Children will bring a homework book home on Fridays and all homework books need to be returned to school on Wednesdays.

In the book you will find:

- a spelling and vocabulary sheet of words which your child can practise their reading and spelling for that half term. There won't be 'spelling tests' but as part of our Grammar and Spelling lessons we will be practising the words and spelling patterns they learn through dictation exercises.
- a similar maths sheet with number facts, such as addition facts and times tables for children to practise. Children are expected to know all their times tables by the end of Y4. Again, this will not be 'tested we will check children's developing knowledge during our Number Knowledge sessions in class.
- Each week there will be a sheet with an English, maths and topic activity for your child to complete at home and return in their homework book. Sometimes these will be formal writing or recording, but many times they will be games or activities which you can have fun doing together with your child.
- All children are also expected to read regularly at home and have comments written in their Reading Record book.

