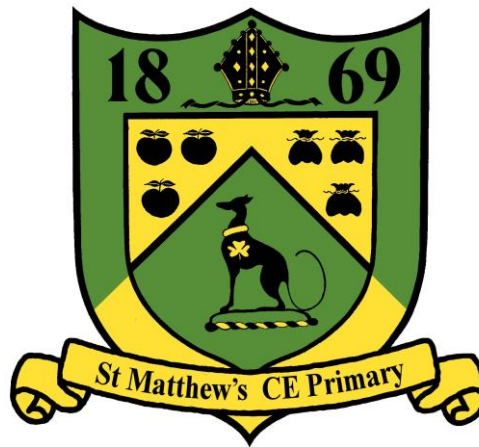


St Matthew's C.E. Primary School



Policy for Teaching and Learning

*'A wise person will hear, and will
increase learning.'*
Proverbs 1:5

Review date Spring 2025



Policy for Teaching and Learning

Overview

The aim of this policy is to outline the school's approach to teaching and learning. It is designed to act as a reference point for existing and new staff whilst also giving clear guidance on the school's approach to teaching and learning to a wider audience. At St Matthew's we aim to develop 'growth' mind-sets by encouraging **all** members of the school community to be active, lifelong learners, who share their interest in learning with each other and our children. We aim to equip children with the core skills, knowledge and values required to be successful in their present and future communities and societies.

Teaching and Learning in our school is founded on:

- Christian values
- Collaboration and partnership
- High expectations of and for all
- Consistency of approach
- A shared understanding of the language of learning.

Principles

- There will be a consistent overall approach to teaching and learning based primarily on the specific needs of each child.
- The approach will be developed with regard to sound educational research as well as a broad range of evidence of effective practice from other schools locally, nationally and internationally.
- Approaches to teaching and learning should always be tailored to the unique needs of the children.
- **The quality of any teaching approach should be judged on the impact it has on pupils' learning.**
- Teachers and senior leaders should regularly reflect on teaching strategies being used in order to evaluate their impact and seek ways to further improve the quality of teaching across the school.
- Within a consistent framework for teaching and learning, there should always be scope for teacher creativity and individuality. Teachers will be encouraged to innovate to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children they teach.
- Lessons should be stimulating, engaging and challenging so that children develop positive attitudes towards learning.



Learning to Learn

Children are motivated to learn through well differentiated learning activities, building on their prior attainment and providing appropriate levels of challenge. Teachers use effective exposition and focussed learning activities with clear objectives and outcomes. Teachers will be flexible in their approach, being responsive to the needs and interests of children. At St Matthew's adults will be used effectively to provide timely interventions during lessons, supporting and challenging learners in order to ensure their progress.

Learning Aims

The use of learning aims and success criteria help children to understand the focus of the learning for the lesson and how to be successful. They are the tools that enable pupils to exercise power over their own learning. In all lessons, children will be made aware of the learning aim that will be shared both verbally and visually. It should be recorded in children's books at the top of any piece of written work.

Learning aims should always be written in child-friendly language so that they can easily be understood by all. They should focus on the learning not the task or specific context.

The learning aim is often supported by success criteria that give the children a clear idea of what success and progress will look like for them in that lesson. This allows children to understand what is expected of them and how they can really challenge themselves to achieve the highest standards.

Sometimes, especially in writing, the learning aim is supported by giving children a set of possible ingredients that they may choose to include in their work to help them achieve the learning aim e.g. *'use short sentences to build suspense'*. These may sometimes be recorded in the children's book although this is not always appropriate or possible. They should be on display throughout the lesson for the children to refer to.

Children should be encouraged to engage with the learning aim. This can be achieved in a number of ways i.e. asking the children to work out what they think the aim might be for the lesson. Children should also regularly play an active part in developing some or all of the success criteria. Teachers use a variety of strategies to achieve this but the most common is through demonstrating and modelling i.e. having gone through a worked example of the learning together, the teacher can ask the children to help them generate some or even all of the success criteria.

What A Good One Looks Like (WAGOLL)

Seeing examples of excellence helps children to understand what they need to include in their work to be successful. Children use WAGOLLs to help them understand what is expected of them and what excellence looks like. WAGOLLs can be generated through the use of the children's work in the lesson and from previous lessons, by generating examples together with the teacher or by having pre-prepared examples. Children should be taught to analyse and unpick WAGOLLs so that they can identify what makes a piece of work effective or successful.

When using children's work, teachers should be sensitive to the feelings of the child whose work is on show, particularly if the group are going to be suggesting improvements. Analysing children's work in this way is dependent on the teacher having created a culture of trust in the classroom where everyone is working together to help each other improve.



Often teachers will generate their own WAGOLLs so that children have a clear example of excellence to aspire to. This is particularly the case in writing where children need to have high quality models of writing shown to them.

Active Learning

At St Matthew's School we believe that learning is at its best when children are active and engaged so we adopt the principles of the Characteristics of Effective Learning in all classrooms.

Characteristics of Effective Learning



Playing and Exploring- Engagement

- *Finding out and exploring*
- *Playing with what I know*
- *Being willing to 'have a go'.*
- *Questioning*

Active Learning - Motivation

- *Being involved and concentrating*
- *Keeping trying*
- *Enjoying achieving what I set out to do.*
- *Resilience*

Creating and Thinking Critically - Thinking

- *Having my own ideas*
- *Making Links*
- *Choosing ways to do things*
- *Independence*

The use of pupil talk and talking partners is an effective strategy we use to encourage active learning. This ensures that lessons do not become dominated by teachers talking at children for long periods of time, which can lead to the children becoming passive and disengaged. With the use of talk partners, a teacher may pose the class a question and then ask the children to discuss the answer in pairs before feeding back to the class.

Having activities ready the moment children enter the classroom is another strategy we use to encourage active learning so that learning starts from the minute the children enter the room.



Mini-whiteboards are also frequently used in lessons to encourage whole class participation and active learning.

We aim to keep teacher inputs as short as possible to minimise teacher talk and maximise the time children are actively engaged in a task. Inputs are often interactive with children using mini-whiteboards to respond to teachers questions throughout the input. Children should never just be sat listening for long periods of time. All children are expected to respond to the teacher's questions and children know that anyone can be called upon to answer – teachers may use random name selectors such as lollipop sticks in order to achieve this.

The use of Working Walls in English and Maths

Working walls are classroom displays that support children's learning in lessons. They help children to understand how the lesson fits into the bigger picture by showing them the 'learning journey' for the unit of work. The learning journey shows the different stages of learning the children are likely to progress through during a unit of work. The working wall also contains visual reminders and models to support children's learning i.e. if a teacher has modelled or demonstrated a concept to the children in a lesson, this can be added to the wall for reference. The walls will also contain key vocabulary that the children learn as they go through the unit of work and examples of high quality pieces of work (WAGOLLS). Working walls are designed to be interactive. Items go on and off the board on a frequent basis i.e. modelled examples from the flipchart, visualizer or whiteboard. The work on the working wall is not mounted or 'beautifully displayed' as it is constantly changing and evolving.

Feedback to pupils

Some of the most effective feedback teachers give pupils occurs during the lesson itself. This can often be in the form of whole-class feedback i.e. the teacher giving pupils feedback on a general misconception or celebrating success (the visualizer is a very useful tool for doing this). Feedback can also be given during the lesson to small groups of pupils or individuals. This form of feedback is usually verbal although the teacher may wish to also give written feedback in books at the same time. Feedback can also be given in the form of marking. The school has developed a separate marking policy which gives guidance on this area.

Collaborative Learning

The school recognises the importance of children learning and working together and has developed a consistent approach to collaborative learning. We believe that collaborative skills need to be explicitly taught, and that children need to be given regular opportunities to apply and develop them. Children become more aware of how their actions have an impact on other children in their group, and on the outcome of their work.

Intervening and Having Impact on Learning

For teaching to be effective, teachers must systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding throughout lessons, anticipating where they may need to intervene and doing so with notable impact on learning.

During lessons, whilst teachers may sometimes have a focus group, they will also monitor the progress of all pupils. This is achieved by teachers taking time to read and look at children's work with them and listening carefully to what the child's thoughts are. Teachers will look for opportunities to address misconceptions with children or try to challenge children's thinking to improve the quality of their work i.e. "can you think of a better word to describe the house than the one you have used?" "Could we try to re-write that sentence but this



time...” This way, teachers are constantly challenging pupils to improve their work in a constructive and supportive manner.

The use of Guided Groups

In some lessons, teachers may identify a specific group of children that they will give additional support to. This might be to address a common misconception that the teacher has identified amongst the group or to accelerate learning by taking them on to the next challenge/objective. The guided groups are flexible and will change based on the children’s needs rather than being a fixed group of pupils.

Teachers are responsible for ensuring the progress of all children in the group and therefore it is not common practice for teachers to stay with just the guided group for the whole session (except for in guided reading).

Teacher Questioning

Effective teacher questions support learning in a variety of ways e.g.:

By encouraging children to articulate their thought process out loud i.e. questions such as how do you know that? Why do you think that? Can you explain what you did to get that?

Challenging children to extend their understanding or think in a different way i.e. How else could you do that? Could there be a better way?

Effective questions also help teachers to get feedback from children during the lesson about their current level of understanding and any misconceptions that they might have. Effective teachers listen carefully to the responses children give and react accordingly.

When asking pupils questions it is important to allow for ‘wait-time’. Giving children time to respond usually improves the quality of the answer as it allows them to consider the question and formulate a response. The use of talk partners can again be effective here and gives children the opportunity to explore their answers with a partner before responding. For example, ‘Sarah, what do you think of Mike’s answer?’, ‘Can you improve on what was just said?’, ‘Do you agree? Why?’

Variation and Challenge

We have high expectations of all children and expect all children to achieve well. When planning learning activities teachers may vary work to ensure children are challenged appropriately. We use a range of strategies:

Different tasks – Within lessons different groups of children may work on different tasks based on their needs.

Different levels of support/task structure – At times children will be working on similar tasks but some groups will have additional support or structure to help them access the task i.e. additional prompts / resources to help them with the task. At times, this may take the form of additional adult support.

Mini-plenaries – Throughout the lessons teachers monitor the progress of all children and may lead mini-plenaries with groups of children to address common misconceptions or to take the learning further to the next level.

Flexible grouping and planning – During lessons and units of work, teachers may re-group children based on how their learning is progressing i.e. if a child is making particularly good progress they may be moved to work with another group who are going



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onto the next challenge whereas as child who needs extra support with a certain concept may join another group of pupils who are having similar difficulties. This allows the teacher to ensure that they are constantly challenging and supporting children at the appropriate level.

Monitoring

Teaching and learning is monitored in a number of ways. A monitoring cycle is in place to support the progress of individuals and groups of learners: 'Pupil Progress Meetings', lesson observations, planning scrutiny, work scrutiny and book trawls. The governing body also monitors teaching and learning regularly through Headteacher Reports, Learning Walks, pupil conferencing and observations.

Children with specific learning needs receive appropriate and timely support in order to ensure progress. Teachers work alongside the SENDCo and parents to ensure appropriate provision is made.

Teachers undergo regular pupil progress meetings to discuss children's progress with the Headteacher and the Assessment Leader.

Regular target setting responds to children's individual needs. Children understand their targets and these are communicated to parents at parents' evening and via annual written reports in the spring term. Teachers track children's progress against key performance indicators in Reading, Writing and Maths using 'The Hampshire Assessment Model' of HAM which is updated each term.