

St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School –
A member of
St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust

Teaching and Learning Policy

‘Learn, love and respect through Jesus.’

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other policies

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At St. Thomas’ 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; it should be fun. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

2 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 We believe that people learn best in different ways. At our school we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.
- 2.2 Through our teaching we aim to:
- enable children to become confident, resourceful, resilient, compassionate, 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 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;
 - enable children to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of this community;
 - help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens;

3 Effective learning

- 3.1 We acknowledge that people learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them. We recognise the following learning styles: linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, kinaesthetic, musical/auditory, interpersonal/group working, and interpersonal/reflective. We take account of these different forms of learning when planning lessons.
- 3.2 We offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. These include:
- personalised learning through assessment for learning (including formative assessment practices) and effective teaching and learning practices;
 - investigation and problem solving;

- research and discovery;
- group work;
- pair work;
- independent work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and responding to questions;
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- visitors to the school;
- residential visits;
- forest school;
- creative activities;
- use of Computing including iPads and interactive media;
- use of DVDs and responding to musical or recorded material;
- debates, role-play, drama and oral presentations;
- designing and making things;
- participation in physical activity;
- child initiated and adult directed play both inside and outside.

3.3.1 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 through the use of learning journals. At St. Thomas' we feel that we can meet the unique needs of children through:

- effective Whole Class Interaction;
- good use of questioning;
- responding to pupils needs;
- guided group learning.

4 Effective teaching

4.1 When teaching we focus on motivating the children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We use a school devised plan to deliver the National Curriculum for England 2014 through a 'Broad and Balanced' approach, and for R.E. we use The Way, The Truth, The Life Scheme. This sets out the aims, objectives and values of the school and details what is to be taught to each year group. Our Long-Term Plan covers a 2-year cycle to ensure the coverage and consistency of the National Curriculum across the year groups, particularly as each class has mixed year groups. We use the Jigsaw PSHE scheme of work as a basis to develop the emotional wellbeing of children and provide them with opportunities to discuss and understand their emotions and feelings.

4.2 We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's stage of attainment assessed through formative and summative assessments. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of the children. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability. When planning work for children with Special Educational Needs we give due regard to information and targets contained in the Provision Map. We have high expectations of all children, and we enable the children to achieve the highest possible standard within their capabilities (*see SEN Policy and the School SEN offer to parents*).

- 4.3** We set academic targets for individual children in each academic year and we share these targets with children, parents and our Governors. We review the progress of each child termly at Pupil Progress Meetings, using the AM7 (hfl) Easy Tracking system and set revised targets accordingly.
- 4.4** We plan our lessons through key skills for learning with clear learning objectives across the curriculum. We take these objectives from the National Curriculum for England and Wales 2014/Early Years Curriculum and the Catholic R.E. framework (Bishop's Conference Curriculum Directory) to ensure high standards within a broad and rich curriculum. Our lesson plans contain information about the tasks to be set, the resources needed, deployment of support staff and the way we assess the children's work. We evaluate lessons so that we can modify and improve our teaching in the future. All classes have one term per year of weekly Forest School lessons which are linked to other areas of the curriculum to enhance the outdoor learning experiences we offer.
- 4.5** Our teachers establish good working relationships with all children in the class. We encourage adults and children to treat each other with respect and offer them equal opportunities. All teachers and support staff follow the school policy with regard to behaviour and classroom management. We set and agree with children the class code of conduct which includes the School Rules. We teach children to follow these rules to promote the best learning opportunities for all. We praise children for their efforts and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. We have high expectations of pupils' behaviour at all times. If children misbehave they are aware that they may be protective or educational consequences as a result.
- 4.6** We ensure that all tasks and activities that the children do are safe. When we take children out of school, we inform parents, obtain their permission and carry out thorough Risk Assessments using the Hertfordshire on-line Evolve System.
- 4.7** Our classrooms are purposeful learning environments. We change displays regularly, to ensure that the classroom reflects the themes studied by the children and their learning journey. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display their best work at some time during the year. 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.
- 4.8** Through shared leadership, all our teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs accordingly. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) do all they can to support all staff in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice by monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning through learning walks which may be linked to the Performance Management Cycle.

5 The role of governors

- 5.1** The governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on teaching and learning including regular visits.

6 The role of parents and carers

- 6.1** We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents about what their children are learning and how they are progressing by:
- termly parents' consultation evenings.
 - Early Years Learning Journeys including electronic Learning Journeys
 - Through the children's evaluations/reflections in their Learning Journals
 - Where necessary some pupils have an additional communication log for home/school contact
 - Assemblies, Collective Worship, Masses
 - sending information to parents at the start of each term, or more frequently if required, in which we outline the themes that the children will be studying during that term at school through a curriculum letter;
 - through effective use of regular Newsletters, texts and an up-to-date website;
 - sending annual reports to parents in which we explain the achievements made by each child and indicate how the child could improve further;
 - helping parents understand how they can support their children with homework (workshops). We suggest, for example, regular shared reading with very young children, and support for older children with their projects and investigative work.
- 6.2** We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We would like parents to:
- ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible and takes no holidays during term time;
 - ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit;
 - 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.

7 Early Years (also see *Early Years Policy*)

The children are introduced to activities, which relate to children's developmental stages and Early Years Outcomes. These are planned for progressively through our broad and balanced EYFS curriculum in collaboration with Birth to 5 Matters, Development Matters 2021 and with regard to the Early Years Reforms 2021. At St. Thomas' the children in Early Years learn through a carefully planned balance of child initiated and adult directed play, both inside and outside (including Forest School), (nursery will have a heavier weighting of child-initiated play).

The children are assessed through questioning, frequent observations and interactions in child initiated and adult directed activities, which then informs the future planning of curriculum and adult directed activities. Assessment judgements are summarised using the AM7 assessment tracking and management system. Reception assessments are then summarised in the summer term using the Early Learning Goals for the end of Reception.

8 Monitoring and review

- 8.1** 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.

This Policy was ratified by the Local Governing Body at their meeting **20th September 2022**