

Agenda item 4.3 March 2022 Teaching and Learning Policy

IF PUPILS CAN'T LEARN THE WAY WE TEACH. WE MUST TEACH THE WAY THEY LEARN.

Introduction

The staff at St Michael's Primary School believe that teaching and learning is central to our mission as a school. As a school, we are committed to our mission statement:

At St Michael's we learn, grow and look after each other as part of God's family

We believe that quality teaching is essential for quality learning and that our Catholic values and ethos fortify this process and permeate all aspects of school life. We strive to develop all pupils to their full potential in a safe and secure environment.

Learning is the principle reason for the school's existence; it is at the heart of everything we do. It is an activity, which involves everyone. The key to successful pupil learning is effective teaching differentiated to need. Effective teaching occurs when teachers understand and are able to apply the principles of the learning process to a range of children in a variety of situations. We believe that at St Michaels Primary School, learning is part of growing and is essential to the development of the whole child.

AIMS

- to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which gives every child the opportunity to achieve their potential
- to provide a structured learning environment which builds on strengths and supports need thus promoting independence and self-esteem
- to set and expect high standards in everything we do
- to equip children with the knowledge and skills to enable them to progress confidently into secondary education and adult life
- to enable effective learning
- to promote a reflective approach to teaching
- to encourage a consistent approach to teaching
- to develop children as independent learners
- to enable children to make maximum possible progress intellectually, physically, socially, spiritually and morally
- to enable children to have equal access to the curriculum.

Our curriculum is skills based; enabling children to develop the skills they need to be effective, enthusiastic learners, applying skills and knowledge in a wide range of contexts. Lessons are planned around these steps, and we differentiate learning to match the needs of the children within our classes.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We recognise the role of the environment in promoting positive attitudes to and supporting learning. We aim to provide a learning environment that:

- promotes well-being and is secure and safe
- Is rich in language and in number
- Is well ordered and organised
- Conveys high levels of expectation
- Is consistent between classes
- Promotes an atmosphere of mutual respect
- Promotes independence and appropriate ways of working
- Is bright, colourful and stimulating to the senses
- Has a variety of displays covering the breadth of the curriculum
- Has displays which are interactive, record celebrations, set standards of presentation and celebrate children's work and interests

LEARNING AND THE LEARNER'S ROLE

Learners are most effective when they are involved in, and take responsibility for, their own learning. Learning therefore should aim to increase levels of independence and develop the ability to work with sustained concentration for age appropriate periods of time.

Effective learning strategies we aim to promote are:

- The ability to ask and answer questions
- Concentration when listening
- Contributing to discussions in a relevant and thoughtful way
- Co-operating and working collaboratively with peers and adults
- Problem solving skills
- Selecting appropriate resources for a task and putting them away
- Organisational skills
- Responding to and persevering with a task to a conclusion
- Taking pride in the presentation of work
- Presentational skills
- Organising learning
- Responding and conforming to established routines and practices
- Explaining their understanding
- Appreciating and evaluating their own work and that of others
- Setting personal targets

TEACHING AND THE TEACHER'S ROLE

We recognise that the organisation and effectiveness of teaching has a direct impact on the quality of the child's learning experience. We aim to develop and refine our teaching by adopting a reflective approach to pedagogy, a pro-active approach to change and a responsibility for ensuring our own continued professional development and learning. Within our work we aim to develop the following attributes:

- Have high and realistic expectations of ourselves and our pupils
- Be well planned and organised
- Be a role model by being punctual, dressing and speaking appropriately, showing respect for others
- Be supportive of and assist colleagues by respecting individual differences and working collaboratively as part of a whole-staff team

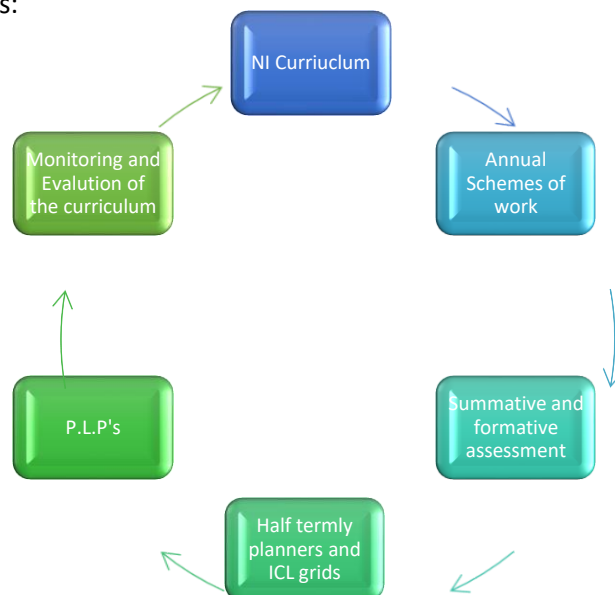
- Have good subject knowledge
- Take a reflective approach to our work
- Seek to improve our skills and understanding through planned professional development
- Develop classroom systems and organisation to support learning
- Develop digital / electronic skills

We aim for our teaching to demonstrate

- Good quality planning based on the assessment of the children's prior knowledge and understanding.
- Appropriate levels of resourcing
- Clear and shared Learning Intentions
- Concise and shared Success Criteria
- Appropriate use of grouping
- Differentiated and matched activities reflecting an understanding of pupils' ability and development levels
- A range of teaching styles and methods
- Effective use of additional adults within the classroom
- Good pace with effective use of time
- Lesson organisation that involves children in their learning
- Developmental questioning using Blooms Taxonomy
- Challenge, encouraging risk taking and learning from mistakes
- Assessment which is formative across the lesson
- A range of learning mediums, e.g. digital, audio, written

PLANNING

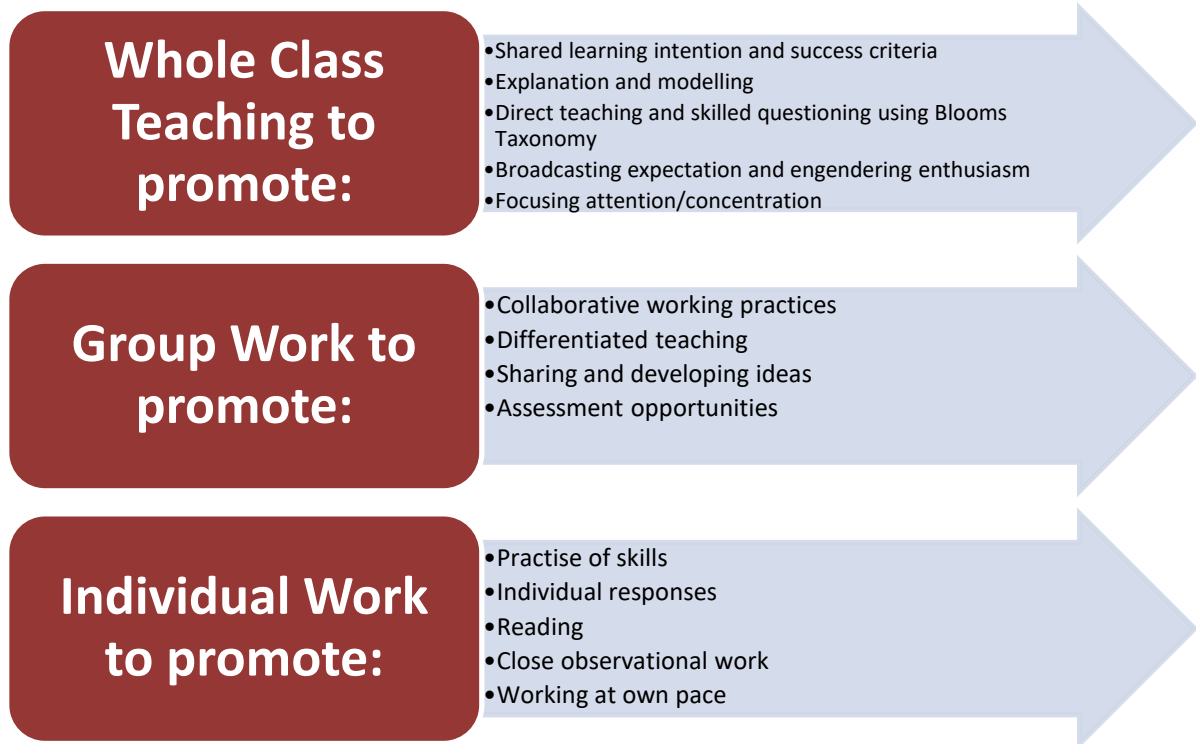
The foundation for curricular development is the School Development Plan; developed through a process of collaboration between staff, and approved by governors. We follow a cross curricular approach to learning where some subjects are taught through a topic and some are covered as discrete subjects. Meetings with colleagues are organised to discuss various aspects of the curriculum and ensure consistency of approach and standards. Planning takes place half termly, with reference to the NI Curriculum. Six weekly plans are submitted to the coordinators of Literacy, Numeracy, and Cross Curricular Skills and Activities and UICT. Plans are based upon teacher judgment, data, pupil need and subject expectation. In St Michael's Primary School, the process of planning for learning is as follows:



Learning is most effective when the person directing the learning ensures that systems, procedures and expectations result in effective ways to:

- Meet the lesson objectives
- Meet the needs of all children
- Optimise the use of support staff
- Allow teachers to teach

Learning is most effective when the teacher directs the learning utilising a ranges of strategies to engage. To achieve this teachers, use a mixture of:



DIFFERENTIATION

So that we always have the highest possible expectations of individual learners and so pupils can demonstrate what they can do, understand and achieve, teachers will differentiate the curriculum according to individual needs by:

- pace;
- content;
- task;
- relevance;
- resources;
- extension;
- autonomy;
- outcome;
- teacher/adult support.

Differentiated tasks will be detailed in half termly planning. Learning objectives will be specified for differentiated teaching and reference will be made in weekly plans to Personal Learning Plans where appropriate.

SEN PUPILS

Teachers provide a differentiated learning environment, which takes account of:

- Gender;
- High and low achievers
- Pupils with special educational needs.
- Newcomer

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the pupils' levels of achievement. Our focus is to develop further their knowledge and skills. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each pupil's level of ability. When planning work for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) we give due regard to information and targets contained within the pupils' Personal Learning Plans (PLPs). We have high expectations of all pupils, and believe that all pupils should be included in the full range of educational opportunities. In line with the Code of Practice, the special needs of individual pupils are catered for through consultation with parents, pupils, SENCO, Co-ordinators and other appropriate agencies and with reference to the Special Needs Policy. To ensure early intervention when needed, we monitor the progress of all pupils on a daily basis.

The following strategies are employed to support pupils with learning difficulties: -

- early identification of learning difficulty;
- differentiated programme;
- setting attainable individual targets with Personal Learning Plan, where necessary;
- regular meetings involving relevant personnel to monitor progress and make further plans;
- effective use of classroom assistants;
- close communication with parents;
- raising self-esteem of the pupil by praising effort, celebrating success and encouraging perseverance.
- Use of assistive technology to overcome barriers to learning

We believe that gifted and talented pupils are those who achieve significantly higher than the average for their age. We acknowledge that high achievement may be academic, creative, sporting or expressive. Gifted pupils are challenged and encouraged to fulfil their potential in their area of strength. Their talents are celebrated by the whole school community.

The following strategies are employed to teach gifted and talented pupils: -

- providing higher expectations;
- differentiating work to include problem solving and investigations;
- encouraging participation in extra-curricular activities;
- increasing responsibility;
- providing opportunities to use and share talents with others in the school community;
- recognising achievement in Assemblies and through local media.
- providing opportunities to work independently ie research.

RESOURCES

Teaching and learning is supported by a range of good quality resources, some will be communal and some classroom based, some will be subject specific, others general purpose. Resources within school should be:

- Meet the needs of pupils and staff
- Of good quality showing appreciation for best value
- Appropriate to the task
- Reviewed regularly for continued relevance

- Labelled in appropriate storage
- Varied to allow for differentiation and preference
- Within the classroom arranged and organised to promote independence

Additionally, we consider the extensive grounds of the school and the outdoor play equipment as significant resources for the development of wellbeing, play and activity based learning and further exploration of the curriculum.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

Planning and Assessment for learning is done through:

- Teachers' half termly planners
- Teaching staff curriculum-based meetings
- Curriculum meetings
- Personal Learning Plans
- Senior Leadership Team meetings
- Pupil Performance meetings
- Informal discussions amongst colleagues
- Discussions between teaching and support staff
- Teacher observations
- Formative and Summative Assessments

Regular assessments are made of pupils' work in order to establish the level of attainment and to inform future planning. Teachers use curricular based Literacy and Numeracy Tracking spreadsheets to record the progress of all students on an ongoing basis. These are monitored by coordinators at the end of each half term. Formative assessment is used to guide the progress of individual pupils. It involves identifying each child's progress in the Cross circular skills and determining what each child has learned and what therefore should be the next stage in his/her learning.

Children from Y3 to 7 complete annual summative assessments in English and Maths. CAT 4 test in Y3, 4 and 6 are used as baseline comparison. Formal summative assessment is carried out at the end of each Key Stage (i.e. in Years 4 and 7) through the use of levels of progression.

Feedback to pupils about their own progress is achieved through discussion and the marking of work. Effective marking:

- helps children understand how to improve and comments aim to be positive and constructive;
- is often done while a task is being carried out through discussion between child and teacher;
- of written work is used sensitively and with discretion so that a child can assimilate a limited number of corrections at one time. This will vary according to the age, ability and task.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Learning and teaching is a shared responsibility and all members of the school community have an important part to play.

Teachers are encouraged to be reflective practitioners. Practice is discussed and shared informally, but reflected on more formally through evaluating ½ termly planners.

- PLP's are evaluated and amended termly in collaboration with the SENCO teacher and classroom assistant (if appropriate).
- Wall displays, book scoops, Learning Walks and talking to pupils' form part of the evaluation process.
- Any teacher who identifies an issue or a developmental need may team-teach a lesson or observe a lesson being taught on request.
- All staff are encouraged to pursue CPD and disseminate the information as appropriate during staff meetings, Key stage meetings or curriculum development meetings.
- Sharing Good Practice is facilitated throughout the year where teachers observe colleagues with specific skills or expertise.

Co-ordinators are responsible for:

- taking the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in their subject throughout the school;
- supporting colleagues in their development and implementation of the scheme of work, and in assessment and record-keeping activities;
- monitoring progress in their subjects and advising on action needed; taking responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for their subjects;
- using release time to support colleagues;
- keeping up-to-date through reading and attending relevant courses and disseminating information to staff
- Preparing reports and evaluating action plans (when necessary) for their subject in line with the School Development Plan and reporting to the Principal and Governors.

The Principal and Senior Leaders monitor

- how effective teaching and learning strategies are in term of raising pupil achievement, through the school self-review process.
- Through monitoring and evaluating procedures, the information gathered is used to inform and influence future developments and is closely linked to the School Development Plan.
- The PRSD process is carried out by the Principal and SLT and involves direct observation of teaching and learning.
- The Vice-Principal observes the practice of Beginning Teachers and /or Early Professional Development teachers.

The Role of Governors

Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on learning and teaching. In particular, they:

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful learning and teaching
- monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations
- monitor how effective learning and teaching strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment
- ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's learning and teaching policies through the school self-review processes These include reports from coordinators and the termly Principal's report to governors as well as a review of the in-service training sessions attended by our staff.

Parents' Role

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping their children to learn effectively. Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning by:

- ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, well-rested and in good health;
- ensuring that their child arrives at school wearing the correct uniform and bringing necessary equipment;
- providing support for the discipline within the school and for the teacher's role;
- supporting the work of educational targets and becoming actively involved in the implementation of any support programme;
- participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainment;
- support the school's homework policy and give due importance to any homework;
- allowing their child to become increasingly independent as they progress throughout the school;

We work hard to inform and assist parents in how they may support their children's learning at home. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress and of ways in which they may participate in their education. This is done through:

- ❖ *School App*
- ❖ *Online Monthly (termly) check Newsletters*
- ❖ *Key School Policies- accessed on school website*
- ❖ *Parent Online Curriculum Meetings*
- ❖ *Pupils' Numeracy and Literacy books sent home each term for parent to write a comment*
- ❖ *Parental Workshops*
- ❖ *Visits from parents in Literacy, Numeracy and Science Weeks*
- ❖ *Informative and helpful remarks when marking work;*
- ❖ *Well-chosen homework activities*
- ❖ *Invitations to parents to attend open days, displays of work, pupil presentations, assemblies, celebrations, sports days, concerts etc.*
- ❖ *Pupils' work is showcased on the school Twitter page*
- ❖ *Annual written reports at end of year*
- ❖ *Annual Parent/Teacher Meetings*
- ❖ *Parents of pupils with Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) are invited each half-term to review progress made and to discuss the way forward*

This policy also needs to be in line with other school policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following:

Assessment Policy
Pastoral Care Policy
Marking Policy
Homework Policy
SEND Policy
Literacy Policy
Mathematics and Numeracy Policy
Learning through Play Policy

This policy will be reviewed: