

St. James' Church of England Primary School, Handsworth

Teaching & Learning Policy November 2020

The policy for teaching and learning is our vision in action informing and supporting the best classroom practice. It will enable all children to make good progress in every lesson taught and will ultimately raise standards throughout the school. All teaching staff are expected to have a clear understanding of the content of this policy and refer to it frequently. At St James effective teaching and learning is seen as the outcome of team work encompassing pupils, staff, parents, governors and other members of the community.

Mission Statement

*Let Your Light Shine
Matthew: 5:16*

At St James, we believe every child has a light, their own light and with support and nourishment they will be able to shine. Every individual is taught to value themselves and the contribution they can make to the school community and the wider world. By providing creative experiences and challenge for all learners, children grow in resilience, learn to persevere, develop belief in themselves and build hopes and dreams for their future.

Aims

At St James Primary School our primary aim is to ensure we reward, and facilitate, achievement at all levels, create enquiring minds and in doing so develop well rounded, respectful and understanding young citizens of the world. We do this by:

- Nurturing independent, responsible and confident individuals who develop positive self-esteem and a high expectation of themselves.
- Enabling pupils to become life-long learners with a thirst for knowledge, fostering their curiosity and equipping them with creative thinking skills to enable them to respond to challenges.
- Celebrating their individuality and that of others, with a respect for all and the world they live in, and an understanding of their place in modern Britain and the world today.
- Continually seeking new and better ways to develop teaching and learning in order to provide consistent and continuous quality first teaching.

Curriculum

At St James we aim to provide an engaging, broad and balanced curriculum. We follow the National Curriculum programmes of study for Science, Art, Design Technology, Geography, History, Music and Computing. In addition, we promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development including fundamental British values.

As a vehicle for teaching these subjects we use the Cornerstones Curriculum. It is a skills and knowledge-based curriculum with a creative edge. It's rooted in a proven pedagogy based on how children learn best. At its heart is the principle that every child deserves a rich, fun, engaging and broad learning experience. The curriculum nurtures engagement, curiosity and innovation, brings learning to life in meaningful ways, and is highly supportive in enabling pupils to become happy, healthy and responsible citizens in their community.

We believe that children learn best when there is consistency and continuity in our approach. Through the Cornerstones Curriculum, half-termly themes ensure coverage of the National Curriculum whilst exciting the children's imagination and inspiring them to learn. A thematic curriculum is brought to life by high quality teaching, inspirational learning activities and opportunities to listen and plan for the developing interests and motivations of the children. The thematic curriculum, delivered through Cornerstones is built upon a four stage teaching and learning philosophy - ENGAGE – DEVELOP – INNOVATE – EXPRESS.

Engage

The 'Engage' stage of learning provides children with an inspiring and thought provoking starting point that stirs curiosity and creates interest. Children engage in purposeful learning experiences; in and outside the classroom, making use of partners, experts and the community to provide the stimulus to learn. To ensure that children are immediately 'engaged', teachers provide a range of memorable experiences and starting points that stimulate the children's interests in a particular theme or concept.

Develop

During the 'Develop' stage of learning, children are given the opportunity to expand and master key skills, subject knowledge, research techniques and independence. Children become diligent learners making sense of information and experiences, leading to sound understanding and progress. Children develop their knowledge, understanding, key and subject skills required to progress through their learning tasks and gain high quality relevant learning experiences.

Innovate

In the 'Innovate' stage of learning, children's ability to work creatively, exploring possibilities and finding solutions will be challenged. Using and applying previously learned skills, knowledge and understanding children's work collaboratively to innovate, managing their own learning to achieve given success criteria. Teachers provide an imaginative and relevant scenario that provides opportunities to observe how successfully children can use, apply and problem solve in creative and imaginative ways.

Express

In the final stage of learning, children are given the chance to share, celebrate and reflect with a range of partners and audiences. Children cement their learning through shared reflection with peers and other adults and are able to suggest next steps of learning. Teachers discuss, review and support individual and group evaluations using their observations and evidence to make summative assessments.

Effective Teaching and Learning

When teaching we focus on motivating the children by setting exciting and enjoyable challenges and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. All staff have shared high

expectations of their practice and through mutual challenge and support we strive for our teaching to be of a consistently high quality. As a school we expect all teachers to:

- Take a full and determined responsibility for the progress of all of the pupils in their class.
- Have consistently high expectations of all pupils in all areas of their learning and school life.
- Ensure teaching is based on enabling all pupils to make progress despite their level of ability.
- Plan lessons that are based on systematic and accurate assessment of our pupils' prior learning.
- Recognise the need for consolidation and practice as well as ensuring that lessons are challenging.
- Plan opportunities for learning to be extended through homework, booster and intervention groups and enhanced through enrichment opportunities.
- Wherever possible, make links to real life experiences in order to make the curriculum relevant.
- Make the curriculum reflective of, and responsive to the cultural background of our pupils.
- Provide good teacher modelling alongside pupil participation, appropriate pace and effective and differentiated questioning.
- Plan work for children with special educational that is based on information and targets contained in the children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs).
- Set challenging opportunities for more-able pupils.
- Enrich the curriculum, enhance the children's learning and extend their experience through the use of visits and visitors.

The Leadership Team monitor the standard of teaching and learning on a regular basis. Observations, learning walks, internal and external book trawls and coaching are all used to improve teaching and learning. Outcomes of these are fed back to staff encompassing areas of strength and development to support improvement.

We acknowledge that children learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in ways that suit them best. We take into account these different forms of intelligences when planning teaching and learning styles.

We offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. These include:

- investigation and problem solving;
- research and finding out;
- group work;
- paired work;
- independent work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions;
- use of ICT;
- visits to places of educational interest;
- creative activities;
- watching media, responding to musical and recorded material;
- designing and making things;
- participation in athletic or physical activity;
- after school clubs;

Inclusion

St James Primary is an inclusive school and within classes, we ensure that provision is made for all pupils' learning needs. Our integrated topic approach and opportunities to take the curriculum outside of the classroom environment engages all learners and effectively caters for their varied learning styles. We believe this holistic approach will help our children to develop the skills needed to become responsible global citizens. We aim to:

- Provide practical first-hand experiences
- Scaffold work to support the child in completing the task.
- Provide opportunities to show that all pupils' culture and background is valued.

- Enable children to recognise that effort, persistence and good teaching are what helps them to improve. Rather than praising success we praise effort and persistence., we teach children to see mistakes and failure as positive.
- Provide opportunities for children to deepen their understanding of concepts and skills through challenge.
- Deploy the inclusion team to support children with barriers to their learning.
- Ensure children are treated with equal respect and the appropriate behaviour management strategies.
- Ensure children’s individual education and medical needs are considered in curriculum planning and organisation of the classroom and resources.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Care Plans for all children in their classes/groups.

The Learning Environment

At St James we believe that children learn best when the learning environment is well organised, the atmosphere is purposeful and the pupils feel safe. With careful thought and planning, an effective classroom environment is used as an interactive resource that has a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning, and therefore supports raising standards.

What should it look like?

- It facilitates independent learning through access to a variety of relevant resources.
- It ensures that the resources are of a good quality and clearly labelled to enable more independent and, where possible, child-led learning.
- Teachers and children work together to establish an attractive welcoming and well organised environment engendering respect, care and value for all resources.
- A warm, light, clean and tidy workspace which complies with health and safety regulations.
- It provides a stimulating work environment through active and regularly updated Working Walls and displays, across the curriculum that both supports and celebrates the children’s learning.
- There is a designated ‘Worship Area’ and ‘Reading Area’ in each classroom.
- The learner has a clear understanding of what they are going to learn and the steps that they will go through to achieve this.
- The learner has a good understanding of class & school rules, routines and expectations.
- It ensures and promotes the school ethos and values.
- The learner and their achievements are valued.
- It promotes good working relationships between adults and children and children and children.
- Teaching Assistants and other adults are deployed effectively working with individual children and small groups to promote enhanced learning.
- Noisy, active environments, when and where appropriate; peaceful and calm when necessary.

See checklist – ‘**Features of an effective Learning Environment**’

Behaviour for Learning

At St James we have high expectations of children’s behaviour and recognise that good learning behaviour is far more than compliance. Good learning behaviours include high levels of engagement and focus with children developing independent learning skills and good co-operative skills. Children are shown how to take personal responsibility for their actions and their learning. Children are rewarded for achievements in all aspects of learning: academic and social.

Our values are embedded in our school ethos and reflected in the children’s behaviour. Children learn how to respect others and themselves, demonstrating empathy, fairness and kindness towards others and respecting and celebrating each other’s individual backgrounds and talents. Children are given opportunities to gain responsibility and model positive behaviour through the Prefect and the House Captain system.

Learning Behaviours at St James

- A 'growth mind set' is actively promoted, encouraging children to take risks and learn through making mistakes.
- Children are actively engaged and encouraged to lead their own learning.
- Children and adults demonstrate mutual respect and positivity.
- Children are encouraged to take pride in their work and how they present it.
- Children are able to say what they are learning.
- Children are encouraged to take risks and develop a growth mind set.
- Children are rewarded for effort and resilience when they are faced with a challenge.
- As confidence builds and concepts are mastered children are able to apply their learning independently.
- Questions encourage critical thinking skills and metacognitive thinking.
- Children initiate questions, lead discussions and respond to questions from the teacher and each other.
- Children reflect on their learning through self/ peer evaluation, what they did well and next steps (even better if)
- Once learning is embedded children apply what they have learnt to different contexts.
- Children also take up opportunities to learn through extra-curricular activities on offer after school.
- Pupil voice is evident.

We want all our pupils to relish challenges, embrace their mistakes as part of the learning process, value the importance of effort, respond carefully to feedback and take inspiration from others. This will help them to achieve, not only with us, but also in their future lives as adults.

The Role of Teaching Assistants

We have a number of support staff who play a central and specialised role in our learning processes. Each year group has assigned teaching assistants; teachers are responsible for the effective direction and deployment of TAs to support learning. Key elements of their role are:

- to support the teaching; either through direct delivery or by enabling access for identified children.
- supporting a small group within the lesson.
- delivering intervention groups under the guidance of the teacher.
- carrying out assessments.
- preparing resources.
- supporting children with EHCPs
- supporting learning behaviours
- facilitating the classroom environment so that it is accessible for all.

Assessment for Learning

At St James, teachers are constantly assessing and we aim to include children in their learning as much as possible. Children are encouraged to play an active role in their learning and develop the skills to be able to assess themselves and understand how to improve.

Assessment for Learning is an ongoing process, that allows the teacher to support progress and enables them to identify gaps in learning. Next steps for learning are identified through:

Questioning

Questioning is rich, probing, focused on learning and used to inform assessment and future learning.

Effective questioning is used to:

- Make pupils think more deeply
- Inspire and enthuse pupils
- Fire pupils' imaginations
- Establish what pupils have learnt
- Summarise the learning
- Assess pupils' knowledge and understanding at all stages of the lesson
- Establish whether a pupil's grasp of a concept or skill is secure

- Identify misconceptions and where pupils are 'getting stuck'.

Marking and Feedback

This must always be meaningful to the child. It must enable them to see success and support them with ways on how to improve (See Marking Policy)

Observation in lessons

This involves watching children and listening to their discussions to assess their learning as it is happening and making planned observations of particular children to support their learning in the lesson.

Self and peer assessment

Self and peer assessment enables pupils to actively participate in their learning and, through their own assessment of strengths and areas to develop, has a positive influence on the learners' self-esteem, motivation and progress.

More formal assessments are carried out at the end of each term to provide a summative picture of the children's progress and attainment against the National Curriculum objectives and standards. Each term we have an assessment week which enables teachers to use assessments (tests) and a wide range of evidence to develop a comprehensive picture of where the child is currently working in relation to age related expectations. Teachers are held accountable for their children's attainment and progress through termly 'CAP' meetings. From their analysis of their data, teachers are expected to identify those individual/groups of pupils at risk of underachievement and be able to make decisions about the next steps for learning and any extra provisions required for any child/ren. Of course if teachers identify a specific need at any point through the academic year, they will naturally respond to it immediately.

Well-Being

At St James Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health.

Our role in school is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we ensure we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing. (See Mental Health and Well-Being Policy)

The Role of Parents

At St James 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.

We do all we can to inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- Making parents feel welcome in the school and there are opportunities for collaboration between parent, teacher and child.
- Holding Parents' evenings for all year groups, twice a year.
- Holding parental workshops on a range of subject areas including Y2 and Y6 Sats
- Sending home end-of-year reports in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicates how their child can further improve.
- Providing homework which enables parents/carers to support their child's learning through a range of medium and at a time which suits their family needs.
- Promoting a positive attitude towards school and learning in general.

We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing policies and working alongside the school to support their child's learning by:

- Ensuring that their child has the best attendance and punctuality record possible.

- Ensuring that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit.
- Informing school if there are any matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour at school.

Professional Development

In order to provide the best education for our children we are continually striving to keep ourselves updated with current research, learning theories and strategies and how we can be more effective as the facilitators of learning for children. At St James Primary School, the staff within the school see themselves as learners and behave as learners. We are not afraid to try new and different approaches to learning and we encourage innovation and individuality.

All teachers' personal enthusiasms and passions are positively encouraged and they reflect on their strengths and areas for development, through appraisal. All our teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs accordingly. We do all we can to support our teachers in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice.

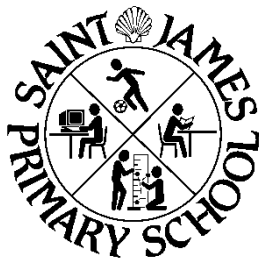
We do this through:

- Weekly INSET meetings which are used to deliver training on various aspects of the curriculum ensuring consistency of approach and standards and focusing on school improvement priorities.
- Teacher training days - Priorities driven
- External Support – School Improvement Partner
- Off-site courses
- Release time from class to visit other schools, observe peers
- Support – mentoring/coaching model
- Moderation of writing sessions per year group/across year groups

Teachers will be expected to disseminate any areas of expertise by being role models for their colleagues. This will involve allowing them to observe them teach as well as supporting them in their practice. This expertise is also shared, and further developed, through placements: PGCE, BA Education, SCITT, NVQs, as well as supporting other schools.

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

Marking and Feedback Policy
 Assessment Policy
 Behaviour Policy
 SEND Policy
 Mental Health and Well-Being Policy



Addendum to St James' Teaching and Learning Policy The Early Years Foundation Stage

The features of effective teaching and learning at St James as defined in our whole school policy on Teaching and Learning apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key stage 1 or 2. The following procedures relate specifically to the Foundation Stage.

Early Childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their life. At St James we value greatly the importance that the Early Years Foundation Stage plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

The Early- years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of children, and activities that provide learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It offers a rich and stimulating environment;
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At St James we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitude and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebrations and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. Every child has the opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. The children are introduced to positive learning behaviours – good looking, good listening and good sitting. They are taught to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, co-operative and to use reasoning. Children begin to understand the concept of Growth Mind set. They are taught that they can 'grow their brains' so that they understand that everyone can learn with practice and effort. The children are taught how to learn and how to become successful learners. They begin to take responsibility of their own learning and begin to understand the concept of challenge.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations linked to the needs of our children to support their journey to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We do this through;

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem;

- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and using a range of teaching strategies based on children's needs;
- The range of approaches that provide first hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- Providing a wide range of stimulating opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively. This provision of inspiring, learning provocations that stimulate children in wanting to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- Ensuring positive interactions occur between staff and children. Our role is to ensure each interaction, using high quality questioning, models the highest expectation. Our questioning, scaffolds, prompts thinking, builds on children's strengths, interests and questions. We encourage children to communicate and talk about their learning, and so develop independence and self – management;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued. We support learning through an appropriate and accessible environment, well maintained and adequate resources both indoors and outdoors;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more- able, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds and ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds;
- Monitoring children's progress and future learning needs through observations and taking action to provide and support as necessary;
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and enable them to access the curriculum and make progress. This partnership helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well – being and achievement;

Positive relationships

At St James, we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. Our aim is to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education. All staff in St James's Foundation Stage understand the importance of developing good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen.

Enabling Environments

At St James, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The daily routine is structured to include time for personal exploration, small and large group sessions and social experiences. The routine ensures time for children to repeat, revisit and reflect on their previous experiences, as well as opportunity for 'exploration time' during which children can really master and engage in deep level learning. The routine is always consistent, thus ensuring children feel secure and are able to operate independently. Within the elements of the daily routine varied and enriching experiences are planned to maintain and stimulate children's attention and learning. There is a purpose to everything that we do. The children have continual free flow access to a stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environment that is language rich and set up with clearly labelled discrete areas of learning for planned continuous provision. Play – based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned interjections provided by staff. Planning for the environment is informed by children's interests, as well as agreed topics. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from as well as the wider world. We encourage children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. Therefore, the environment is organised to

allow children to explore and learn safely and securely. We ensure spaces are safe and resources and equipment are clearly labelled, easily accessible, plentiful, well maintained, organised and appropriate.

Learning and Development

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the Developmental Matters Statements from the Early Years foundation document. Planning is based upon themes with discrete phonics, maths and reading directed teaching.

There are seven areas of learning and development which are split into Prime areas and Specific areas. They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for children to reach their potential and levels required at the end of EYFS. Three areas are particularly crucial in igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three Prime areas are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

The Four Specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive arts and design

Characteristics of Effective Learning

At St James we ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and Exploring – children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things and “have a go”

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build on these ideas as well as having the opportunity to think creatively alongside others as well as on their own. They talk with others as they investigate and solve problems.

- Active Learning – children will have time and space to concentrate and keep trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As they develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

- Creating and thinking critically- we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Adults support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children are able to access resources and move freely and purposefully around both the indoor and outdoor learning environment to extend their learning.

Assessment

We are committed to narrowing the gap in progress and attainment, ensuring that no child underachieves, especially those from identified underperforming groups. Regular monitoring and evaluation of children's progress enables us to continually adjust our provision in response to any areas of underachievement that may be identified. Assessment is a fundamental part of the planning process. To help us decide what to provide we observe children in their play in a range of situations. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. We respond to the development and

learning of each child by planning a range of experiences which include the Prime and Specific areas of learning and the Characteristics of Effective Learning. All our teaching is based on our knowledge of the children's current learning, interests and developmental stage. This knowledge is gathered and continually updated through a variety of ongoing assessments, which take the form of:

- learning observations;
- photographs;
- and children's work collated in Learning Journeys.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of all staff in EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Leadership Team including the EYFS Lead will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

It is important that this policy is read alongside other whole school policies:

Assessment Policy

Marking and Feedback Policy

Behaviour Policy

Reviewed and updated: Jenny Hanson & Jayne Pritchard (Deputy Head Teachers) November 2020