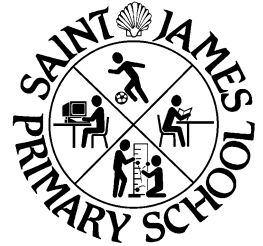




St. James' Church of England Primary School, Handsworth



Teaching & Learning Policy January 2024

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.

Our Guiding Principles

'Know more, Do more, Remember More'

Our relational approach allows the children of St James to build self-efficacy through wide ranging experiences that enable them to develop resilience and independence and create a deep sense of belonging as we reflect upon both our successes and setbacks. We believe in every child's entitlement to achieve and succeed.

We are a meta-cognitive school where we believe pupils learn best when they:

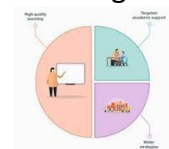
- Have their basic physical needs met
- Feel secure, safe and valued
- Receive explicit instruction on how to learn in the most effective ways
- Know how to plan, monitor, evaluate and improve their work using a range of strategies
- Are able to self-regulate and be prepared for effective learning
- Can support the learning of others through positive mind-set and collaboration

Our Philosophy for Effective Teaching and Learning

The best available evidence indicates that great teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve pupil attainment. Ensuring every teacher is supported in delivering high-quality teaching is essential to achieving the best outcomes for all pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged among them.

(EEF 2022-23) School Improvement Planning at St James draws on the EEF's tiered model – **1. High Quality Teaching, 2. Targeted Academic Support, 3. Wider Strategies.**

The guide to using this model has supported us as a school in determining how best to focus time, effort, and resources by identifying evidence-informed strategies with the greatest potential to support pupil attainment.



Much research and focus has been undertaken by the school to understand how children learn best. This has resulted in a refined understanding of what conditions are needed for great learning. All the strategies which have been adapted are rooted in evidence-based research. Learning is at least in part defined as a change in long-term memory. As Sweller et al (2011) has pointed out, 'if nothing in the long-term memory has been altered, nothing has been learned'. It is, therefore, important that we use approaches in our classrooms which help pupils to integrate new knowledge into the long-term memory and make enduring connections that foster understanding. To do this we can draw on a growing evidence base from the 'learning sciences'. Learning sciences is a relatively new interdisciplinary field that seeks to apply understanding generated by cognitive science to classroom practice. At St James this includes the work of Mary Myatt, Barak Rosenshine, Tom Sherrington, Alex Bedford and Ron Berger. We are a school of 'doers, believers and achievers' and we ensure that children are ready for the next stage in their education, through high quality teaching and learning.

Memory and Cognitive Load Theory

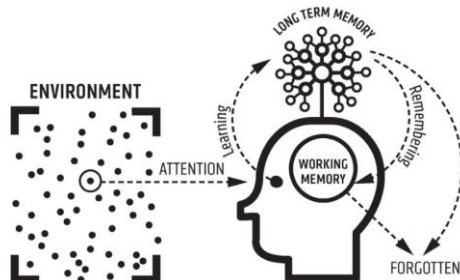
Information enters our brains from the environment into our working memory. Our working memory is finite, small and can only cope with a limited amount of information at once. We process the information in order for it to be stored in the long-term memory. The long-term memory is unlimited and we retrieve the information back into the working memory when we need it.

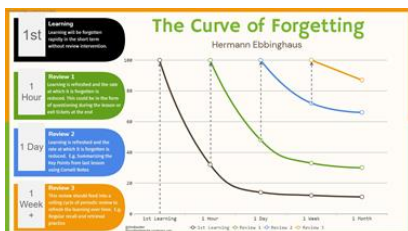
Our brains organise knowledge into 'schemata', which are cognitive networks of knowledge, beliefs and experiences about aspects of the world.

Typically, new information and language is stored if we can connect it to pre-existing knowledge that we have. This prior knowledge is key to our capacity to learn new information. The more complex and interconnected our schemata are, the easier it is to make sense

of new information and the better we are at organising it so that it makes sense.

When we understand something, it means our schemata are more fully formed, more connected and can be explained and recalled more fluently from our long-term memory.





As a school we understand that forgetting is a natural part of learning - Ebbinghaus' forgetting curve (1885). By connecting new and prior learning and building fluency into our teaching practice, we can support our pupils to retain knowledge and master new skills. Cognitive neuroscience teaches us about the importance of deep and sustained learning by helping children make as many links as possible between new

learning and prior learning. At St James we make it our priority to teach the curriculum through a range of evidenced based pedagogical approaches that provides learners with regular opportunities to revisit prior learning. What's important is that learners have regular opportunities to recall prior learning and time to practice their key skills so they remain sharp and so they can retrieve information they've learned when needed. Regular practice sessions to recall prior knowledge and put it into action helps disrupt the forgetting curve.

The 'Cognitive Load Theory' states that the more fluent we are with the retrieval of stored information from the long-term memory, the more capacity we have in our working memory to attend to new information and the more working memory space we have to deal with applying the information. Misconceptions occur when our schema contains incorrect information or are an incomplete model of how a process works. When misconceptions occur, they have to be unpicked and a new, correct schema has to be re-learned.

The teaching and learning strategies that we employ at St James are underpinned by this model to enable our children to learn more, remember more and be the best person that they can be developing a love of life-long learning.

The Redundancy Effect

When pupils are presented with unnecessary information, it clogs up their working memory. This means they may remember the irrelevant information and forget the information we want them to learn. It is important that teachers provide clear, concise information and instruction so that pupils can focus on the information to be learned. Teachers should avoid too much 'waffle' and deviating from the point.

"Memory is the residue of thought."

Daniel Willingham

(In other words, we are more likely to remember things that we put most effort into thinking about. We need to maximise opportunities for pupils to work hard with their thinking.)

Our general approach to teaching and learning at St James is built around **Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction (2010)**. These define the key elements of effective practice. They are based on research, including 'cognitive load theory', and are designed to give direct links from research into practice.

Rosenshine 1 - Daily review	Rosenshine 2 - New materials in small steps	Rosenshine 3 - Ask questions	Rosenshine 4 - Provide models	Rosenshine 5 - Guide student practice
Rosenshine 6 - Check student understanding	Rosenshine 7 - Obtain high success rate	Rosenshine 8 - Scaffolds for difficult tasks	Rosenshine 9 - Independent practice	Rosenshine 10 - Weekly and monthly review

Based on these key elements of effective practice, teachers employ a clear structure to scaffold pupils towards success across the curriculum. This is the 6 phases of a lesson. **Lessons are planned ensuring that the children are supported to 'remember more' as the main priority.**

Connect	Explain	Example	Attempt	Apply	Challenge
Retrieval	Instruction		Deliberate practice	Guided or independent practice	Integrate
Connect prior learning	My Turn	Worked examples	Our turn	Your turn	Sophisticate through retrieval, explanation,
Connect to concept and Big Idea	Explicit vocabulary instruction	Full or partially completed diagrams	Allows for misconceptions to be identified		Sophistication through self-questioning
Position learning within KO			Feedback given at the point of learning		Summarise using 'I know and I think' statements

Reviewing Previous Learning (Retrieval Practice)

Retrieval practice supports our long-term memory and our level of fluency recall. Unless we review what we have learnt, our memory of that information fades. Many of our lessons will begin with a short review so that pupils are able to re-activate previously acquired knowledge. By re-activating this prior knowledge, we are reducing cognitive load and ensuring previously learned material is not forgotten.

Principles of Retrieval Practice

- **Involve everyone** (all pupils should be involved in checking their understanding)
- **Make checking accurate and easy** (short activities with instant feedback)
- **Specify the knowledge** (be clear what knowledge is being tested)
- **Keep it generative** (rely on memory and shut the books!)
- **Vary the diet** (use different types of activities)
- **Make it time efficient** (activities should be short and sharp!)
- **Make it workload efficient** (should involve no teacher marking)

Examples of retrieval practice strategies

- Quick fire quizzes – low threat/ high challenge
- Multiple choice
- Explain
- Summarise
- Drawing and labelling
- Matching
- Retrieve two things – show what you know – before/ during/ at the end of a lesson...

Present new material in small steps

The most effective teachers recognise the limitations of the working memory and break new learning into smaller chunks. They then ensure that pupils have sufficient time to practise these small steps.

At St James we are fully aware that teaching a 'chunk' of new learning at the beginning of a lesson does not work, so lessons are planned following the 'teach, task, teach, task...' approach (Alex Bedford 2021).

Teachers should use continued assessment for learning to judge whether children have mastered small steps, before moving to new learning. Where it is evident children need more practise, teachers should be confident to go back and re-teach skills and lessons again.



Questioning and checking for understanding

Effective questioning lies at the heart of great instructional teaching. Questioning needs to be motivating to help maintain the focus of the children and avoid distraction. High quality questioning generates curiosity. It is vital that teachers get as much feedback as possible from pupils to ascertain how well they are learning. Teachers should be constantly wondering 'How is it going?' 'What have they understood?'. More effective teachers ask more questions, involving more pupils, probing in more depth and taking more time to explain, clarify and check for understanding. They also ask students to explain their thinking (Bloom's Taxonomy).

Relevant instructional procedures include:

- Ask a large number of questions and check for understanding.
- Ask students to explain what they have learned,
- Check the response of all pupils.
- Provide systematic feedback and corrections.

Questioning Techniques	
Cold Call	No hands up or calling out. Ask everyone → select who answers.
No Opt Out	If students get an answer wrong or don't know, go back to them to check that they now know the answer
Check for Understanding	Ask a selection of students to relay back what they have understood about the question under discussion.
Probing Questioning	Make each question and answer exchange a mini dialogue, probing to explore student's understanding
Think Pair Share	Allocate talk partners, set a question with a time limit, ask students to think, then discuss, then report back.
Say it again better	Accept students' first half-formed responses but then help them to reframe a better more complete response.
Whole Class Response	Use techniques like mini whiteboards or ABCD fingers to provide simultaneous responses from a whole class.

(taken from Tom Sherrington's 'Roshenshine's Principles in Action')

The wrong way to check for understanding is to ask only a few questions, call on volunteers (usually the same children), and then make the assumption that all of the class understands. It is also an error to ask, 'are there any questions?' and that if there aren't any, assume that everyone understands. If we are going to be sure that all students have a secure understanding, teachers should not assume that knowledge that has been shared in the public space of the classroom has been absorbed and learned by any individual.

Explanation and Modelling

Provide models


Providing models is a central feature of giving good explanations. Models can be:

- Physical representations of completed tasks e.g. a model paragraph for a story.
- Conceptual models e.g. model to describe the behaviour of solids, liquids and gases.
- Explicit narration of our thought processes e.g. thinking aloud when reading a story or when solving a problem.

Knowledge notes

To support the children's substantive knowledge, the teachers write knowledge notes to accompany the learning. The children use these notes during the lesson to support and aid their learning so that they know more and therefore remember more. They also use these notes as a revision tool when looking back at previous learning or for giving a context for new learning. These knowledge notes:

- Elaborate and support retrieval practice for essential key concepts.
- Can be used to retrieve previous knowledge throughout the teaching sequence.
- Communicates knowledge and vocabulary clearly.
- Scaffolds difficult vocabulary/ concepts.

Determiners
Determiners are a type of word that comes before a noun to introduce it and provide more information about the amount of the noun.
Examples: all, most, many, a few, some the vast majority
Most cars in Britain are bought by the public.
A few cars tend to have mechanical issues.


Worked examples

Effective teachers tend to provide students with worked examples so that the general patterns are clear. They may then reduce the level of completion, leaving pupils to finish the problems off with developing independence.

If teachers are struggling with pupils who seem 'stuck', often showing 'another example' is the key to unlocking their understanding.

Provide scaffolds

Teachers may provide scaffolds for more difficult tasks (a bit like stabilisers on a bike). Scaffolds are intended to be temporary and can be removed so that pupils don't become too reliant on them.

Guide student practice

Nobody excels at anything without lots of practice and that starts with the way that teachers conduct their lessons. Watching a teacher perform a task doesn't necessarily mean a pupil can do it, even if they have seen exactly what the teacher has done and heard them explain it really clearly. There's just too much to take in, to process and turn into knowledge they can then deploy themselves.

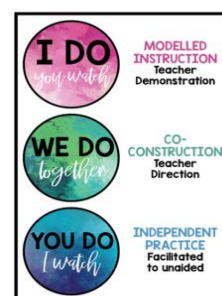
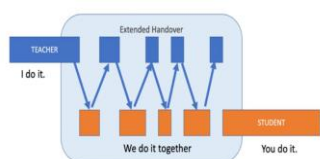
What is needed is a much more extended hand-over where the teacher works with the students to do the task together.

Relevant instructional procedures include:

- Provide a high level of practice for all pupils.
- Guide pupils as they begin to practice.
- Prepare pupils for independent practice.
- Monitor students when they begin independent practice.

All pupils need to practise – but that practice must be guided so that the chance of forming misconceptions is minimised. Also, guided practice contributes to generating high success rate, which in turn fuels motivation and engagement during more independent work.

At St James, teachers are encouraged to use the 'I Do, We Do, You Do' model in lessons - first modelling new learning, giving plenty of time for guided and repeated practice and then letting pupils try on their own. Some pupils may require more guided practice than others.



Teachers should be aiming for a success rate of around 80%. If pupils are getting too much wrong, then they are effectively practising making errors! Teachers need to be using assessment for learning strategies, as well as checking through books at the end of a lesson, to check for success rates. If pupils are making lots of errors then teachers should re-teach, re-explain and provide more time to practice. Teachers should use their professional judgement to repeat lessons if they feel it is necessary.

On the other hand, success rates should not be so high that children feel unchallenged. Children achieving high success rates, should be challenged within the lesson by being given challenges with more depth, which require more explanation, or by expecting them to work with less scaffolding and support. Teachers should establish a 'can do' mind-set within their classrooms, where children feel able to make mistakes and approach challenge with a positive attitude.

Independent Practice

The ultimate goal for teachers is to construct learning so that pupils are able to do things independently. More successful teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise, and providing them with strategies for checking their work.

Vocabulary instruction

Vocabulary is a vital strand of our children's learning. Teachers carefully select vocabulary they want to teach explicitly. Teachers plan direct instruction for tier two words, as they can have a powerful impact on verbal functioning and be applied to a range of different situations (Beck et al, 2013).

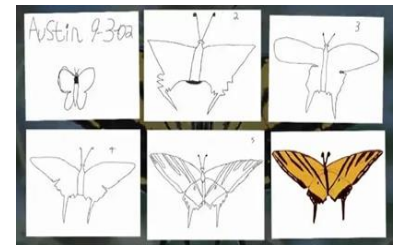
To implement vocabulary into lessons the teachers create different forms of vocabulary instruction and vocabulary organisers so that key tier two and tier three vocabulary can be taught to children to support their learning and give them a better understanding of the world in which we live.

It is our intention that by the end of their primary education, all pupils have a good understanding of many different words and their meaning, are using and understanding these words in their speech, reading and writing and have developed a 'word consciousness' to help them understand academic vocabulary as they move into Key Stage 3 and beyond.

Analyse	Definition
Connection	Use in Context

Models of Excellence - Not accepting mediocrity

Ron Berger from EL Education (2003 – Austin’s Butterfly) demonstrates how multiple drafts interspersed with specific feedback and support - along with perseverance - transform a drawing from a basic first draft to an impressive final piece. With time, clarity, critique and support, Austin, who was a first-grade student from Boise, Idaho, achieves considerable success.



At St James, we aim to foster this approach, talk openly with the children about it and aim to instil an attitude of persistence, precision and patience, along with a desire to aim high and produce the highest quality of work we are capable of in all areas of the curriculum.

Adapting the curriculum to support children with SEND

Teaching and learning at St James will take the backgrounds, needs and abilities of all pupils into account. Children with SEND are included in all aspects of school life. Leaders, class teachers and teaching assistants work together to develop and adapt the curriculum in order to meet the needs of the children with SEND in their classes. Their aim is to remove barriers to learning and provide appropriate adaptations so that children with SEND can access the curriculum.

Good teaching for pupils with additional needs is good teaching for all. Based on EEF research, we support pupils by:

- Using support staff to supplement High Quality Teaching
- Using flexible pupil grouping
- Providing access to additional learning materials and practical resources that support with a range of needs including physical and sensory needs as well as those specific to learning, e.g. writing slopes, pen grips, iPads, reader pens, chew toys, sensory exploration.
- Providing appropriate differentiation, models and scaffolding to aid effective learning and to enable children to access material without their learning needs presenting a barrier.
- Provision of rest breaks, movement breaks and sensory experiences to reduce levels of stress and to support concentration.
- Consideration of seating arrangements.

Learning Environment

The learning environment is wider than the children’s classroom. It is the whole school and therefore all staff have a responsibility to ensure that the school’s vision and ethos are evident throughout. At St James there is an atmosphere of mutual respect between adults and adults, adults and children and children and children. There is a high value based on the self-esteem of children where they can take risks in their learning and learn from their mistakes.

The classrooms are well-organised and routines are well established so that the children can focus on their learning. Resources are clearly labelled and easily accessible. In the room and around the school, children will demonstrate positive behaviours for learning. These will be reinforced through praise and encouragement in line with our Behaviour Policy.

Displays will not be put up for decoration but will celebrate or support learning. Working walls are used to display the learning journey. The learning environment will be actively used by the children in the room and explicitly used by the adults in the room.

Continued Professional Development and Whole School Improvement

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. Staff are supported to engage with evidence based practice to inform their classroom teaching. We believe that evidence should be used alongside experience to support our daily practice. In addition to this, staff are able to continually develop their own subject knowledge and expertise. 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 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.

This is achieved through providing time for specific training in whole school CPD, access to wider training opportunities within the school's network, monitoring, an open feedback culture, and coaching.

Monitoring and evaluation

We constantly monitor teaching and learning in our school to make sure that all of our pupils make the best possible progress from their starting points.

The Senior Leadership Team and subject leaders will monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning through:

- Conducting learning walks
- Lesson observations
- Reviewing marking and feedback
- Pupil progress meetings
- Book scrutinies – internal and external (SIP)
- Planning scrutinies
- Book studies
- Pupil interviews

The Pupil Book Study text by Alex Bedford will be used as a model for looking at books and discussing learning with pupils. Teaching Walk Thrus materials will form the basis for monitoring and develop pedagogical practice through coaching.

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

- Curriculum Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy

Next review due by: Mrs J Hanson January 2025

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