

Our Lady's and St Mochua's Primary School

Learning and Teaching Policy

The quality of learning and teaching is at the heart of school improvement.

Introduction

In Our Lady's & St Mochua's Primary School 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 learning and teaching experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

Aims and Objectives

We believe that people learn best in different ways. In our school we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- ❖ enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners
- ❖ provide opportunities for all children to fulfil their potential
- ❖ ensure children feel happy, secure and are aware of boundaries
- ❖ inform children of the learning outcome and provide feedback
- ❖ encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning
- ❖ promote 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
- ❖ provide opportunities for each child to learn in his/her preferred learning style by using a range of teaching strategies
- ❖ use a variety of resources and differentiate according to ability

Effective Learning

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.

Teaching Approaches

In order to provide an environment where quality learning and teaching experiences are nurtured we will adopt teaching styles that are:

- ❖ stimulating
- ❖ appropriate and relevant to the child's needs
- ❖ enabling and empowering
- ❖ challenging and which will encourage holistic individual development

The different teaching approaches currently used within the school:

- ❖ investigation and problem solving
- ❖ practical activities
- ❖ research and finding out
- ❖ group work
- ❖ paired work
- ❖ independent work
- ❖ whole-class work
- ❖ shared, modelled and guided teaching
- ❖ team/peer teaching
- ❖ asking and answering questions
- ❖ use of ICT hardware/software and interactive white board
- ❖ online learning e.g. LEXIA, Alta Maths, Accelerated Reading
- ❖ fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest
- ❖ creative activities
- ❖ visual and audio
- ❖ debates, role-plays and oral presentations
- ❖ designing and making things
- ❖ participation in athletic or physical activity
- ❖ cross curricular topic work
- ❖ sharing learning outcomes with the children
- ❖ visitors to school/class
- ❖ utilising expertise

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. i.e. WALT Boards, Target Setting, Self Evaluation.

Effective Teaching including Target Setting

When teaching we focus on motivating the children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We use the school curriculum policies to guide our teaching. These set out the aims, objectives and values of the school and detail what is to be taught to each year group.

We plan our lessons with clear learning objectives. Our planners contain information about the learning outcomes, content, teaching and learning approaches, differentiation, ICT, Active Learning Strategies, Effective Questioning, Assessment for Learning, Assessment of Learning and the resources needed. We evaluate our plans so that we can modify and improve our teaching in the future.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's level of attainment. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of the children.

We use a **Class Action Plan** when planning work/target setting for children/groups of children using information passed on from the previous class teacher, standardised scores, class tests, key stage attainment and current attainment to ensure that all targets/tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability to allow them to achieve while at the same time being suitably challenged. The Class Action Plan will target children who are identified as underachievers, those with specific learning difficulties, developing learners or gifted and talented.

In addition, in relation to children with special educational needs, we also give due regard to information and targets contained in the children's Individual Education Plans (IEP's).

We have high expectations of all children, and we believe that their work here at Our Lady's & St Mochua's Primary School must be of the highest possible standard.

The progress of each is monitored on an on going basis with Class Action Plans and IEPs reviewed termly to ensure planning is modified to suit the changing needs of the children.

Our teachers make a special effort to establish good working relationships with all children in the class. We treat the children with kindness and respect. We treat them fairly and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. All teachers follow the school policy with regard to discipline and classroom management. We set and agree class rules with children. We expect all children to comply with these rules which we jointly devise 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 insist on good order and behaviour at all times. When children misbehave we follow the guidelines for sanctions as outlined in our school Positive Behaviour Policy.

We ensure that all tasks and activities that the children do are safe. When we plan to take children out of school, we inform parents and obtain their permission.

We deploy classroom assistants effectively. Sometimes they work with individual children and sometimes they work with small groups. Our classroom assistants also assist with specific programmes including Reading Partnership, Young Enterprise and Special Needs Support.

Our classrooms are attractive learning environments. We change displays to ensure that the classroom reflects the topics studied by the children. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display their work at some time during the year. Classrooms have a range of dictionaries and fiction and non-fiction books, as well as displays relating to literacy and numeracy. 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.

All our teachers reflect on their teaching and plan their professional development needs accordingly. We support our teachers in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice.

We conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all.

The Autonomous Learner

Characteristics of the autonomous learner	How we will promote and foster autonomous learning	Indicators of the autonomous learner
<p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * are independent workers * are self motivated * use initiative * show an interest * show enthusiasm * persist * achieve success * work at their own rate * are willing to learn from their mistakes * are challenged and stimulated * learn from each other * make judgements * use a variety of intelligence/learning styles * peer teach * verbalise * are creative * are technologically aware * are confident * responsible * are able to apply knowledge and skills to new situations * are aware of strengths and weaknesses * can work individually, in pairs, in groups * can collaborate/co-operate * can use resources required * can access resources * are open to new ideas * can problem solve/make judgements 	<p>We will provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * conditions which facilitate all dispositions for learning * challenge and reinforcement tailored to individuals * positive and specific verbal and written feedback * nurturing of self-esteem * teacher participation in activities * respect children's ideas and and variety of expression * well varied activities * practical, oral and written activities * co-operative group work * clear parameters * high, clear individualised expectations * cross-curricularity and opportunities to make obvious connections in learning * further challenge * creative situations * involvement of parents * assessments 	<p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * work longer on task * suggest follow-on activities * can choose and use appropriate resources * talk about the task * take pride in work * will be involved in a greater variety of activities * be able to articulate process, success and failures confidently * will work in ways which match their dispositions * demonstrate tolerance of difference and show interest in the work of others

Planning for Learning

Each teacher will have a **daily plan** which will include:

- Outline for the day
- Details of each lesson taught and focus for each group/individuals - differentiation -
- Evaluation which will include specific notes on individual pupil progress to inform further planning
- All teachers have been given guidelines on what constitutes an effective lesson

Children will be engaged in meaningful activities while class administration is taking place.

In addition to a **daily plan** each teacher will have **medium term plans** taken from whole school **long term planners**.

Our planning includes the following elements which have been agreed throughout the school:

- ❖ clearly defined learning outcomes which are shared with the children at the beginning of lessons
- ❖ an introduction which establishes an appropriate learning environment and connects the learning
- ❖ activities linked to the range of intelligences
- ❖ children demonstrate knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways
- ❖ appropriate resources
- ❖ self and peer evaluation
- ❖ differentiation
- ❖ use of ICT
- ❖ timescale of plan
- ❖ cross curricular links
- ❖ review and evaluation

Learning Resources

Investigative, problem solving and research based tasks using the following resources:

- ❖ Books
- ❖ Library
- ❖ Variety of writing tools
- ❖ Practical equipment
- ❖ DVDs
- ❖ Digital camera
- ❖ C2K software
- ❖ Internet
- ❖ Interactive white board
- ❖ iPads
- ❖ Play resources

- ❖ Outdoor resources
- ❖ Local environment
- ❖ Flip chart
- ❖ White board
- ❖ Teachers
- ❖ Assistants
- ❖ Visitors
- ❖ Peers
- ❖ School grounds including Sensory and Eco Gardens
- ❖ Curriculum materials
- ❖ Peripatetic teachers
- ❖ Items brought from home to aid learning
- ❖ Sport coaches
- ❖ Music teachers
- ❖ Modern languages teacher
- ❖ Dance instructors
- ❖ After School Club Leaders
- ❖ Swimming instructors

We will ensure that the materials used are appropriate to the individual needs of the children.

Forms of Classroom Organisation

Children will know they learn in different ways:

- ❖ Pairs
- ❖ **Mixed ability groups**
- ❖ Reading groups
- ❖ Individuals
- ❖ Whole class
- ❖ Teacher directed groups
- ❖ Circle
- ❖ Class teams
- ❖ Class jobs
- ❖ Computer timetable
- ❖ Creative areas - writing table; art area; role play; sand/water; reading mat; sound corner; library corner; religion table; listening centre; nature table

Strategies for dealing with children with learning difficulties

- ❖ Preventative action in early years
- ❖ Collect and record information
- ❖ Assessment, diagnosis
- ❖ Individualised education plans
- ❖ Short term targets
- ❖ Steps outlined to achieve targets

- ❖ Teacher works with classroom assistant, SEN Co-ordinator, parents, medical, psychological and social services where appropriate
- ❖ Knowledge of child's interests
- ❖ Ensure children experience success
- ❖ Suitability of materials used
- ❖ Raise self-esteem of children
- ❖ Highlight ability and potential

Gifted and Talented Children

- ❖ Individual learning programme
- ❖ Enrichment materials
- ❖ Enlargement of autonomous learning

The Role of the Subject Coordinators

Each subject area is coordinated by a member of staff. Their role is outlined below:

1. To keep up to date with developments within their subject and to be familiar with all related DENI, CCMS, SELB Circulars.
2. To complete a subject development audit at the beginning of each year so that the subject can be monitored and evaluated on an annual basis.
3. To take a lead role in the development of areas within their subject as outlined within the School Development Team. The coordinator will work closely with the Principal, Vice Principal and Key Stage Coordinator Advisors.
4. To be familiar with all school data related to their subject
5. To liaise with the Assessment Coordinator and SENCO in analysing school performance data, setting targets and addressing issues of concern.
6. To ensure data is used effectively to inform teaching.
7. To establish a mechanism to allow for the monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning within their subject - this is subject to overall school policy in this area.
8. To advise all staff in areas related to their subject.
9. To attend all relevant INSERVICE training.
10. To work with outside agencies in promoting their subject - including CASS Officers.

The Role of Governors

The governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on teaching and learning.

The Role of Parents

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 and how their children are learning by:

- ❖ holding parents' evenings to explain our school strategies for teaching literacy, numeracy and other curriculum areas including homework
- ❖ sending information to parents at the start of each year in which we outline the topics that the children will be studying during the year at school
- ❖ Various workshops for parents including Reading Support and Math's Support
- ❖ sending annual reports to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can improve further
- ❖ Parent/teacher meetings

We believe 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
- ❖ 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

Staff Development

We will ensure time and resources are allocated to staff development

- ❖ Whole School INSET
- ❖ Individual INSET
- ❖ Evaluation of INSET
- ❖ Informal staff development
- ❖ Key Stage meetings
- ❖ Visitors to school
- ❖ PRSD

Monitoring and Evaluation

We are aware of the need to review the school teaching and learning policy regularly so that we can take account of the new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school.

Signed:

Chairman of BOG:

Date: