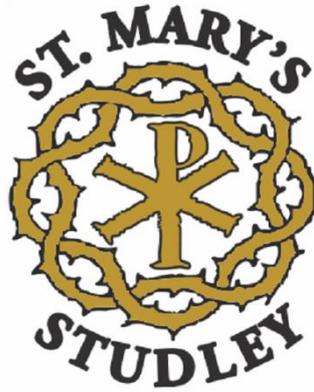


# ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Teaching and Learning Policy

**Headteacher**

O. Finnegan

**Chair of Governors**

S. Coyne

## **Policy on Teaching and Learning**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1.1 At St Mary's Catholic School. Our mission statement is Love to Learn and Learn to Love. We believe in the concept of lifelong learning, and in 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; in short, it should be fun. Through our teaching, we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.
- 1.1.2 As a Catholic school, St Mary's puts Christ and the teachings of the church at the centre of our school curriculum and all we do. We believe a community where the spiritual, cultural and personal worlds in which children live are brought together to form the roots from which their values, motivation, aspirations and our moral code that inform children's choices and actions.

### **2 Aims and objectives**

- 2.1 We believe that people learn best in different ways. At our school, we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows all children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential. We aim to provide an outstanding and holistic education within a Christian context.
- 2.2 Through our teaching, we aim to:
- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring, independent and enterprising learners;
  - foster children's self-esteem, and help them to build positive relationships with other people;
  - develop children's self-respect, encourage them to understand the ideas, attitudes and values of others, and teach them to respect other people's feelings;
  - show respect for a diverse range of 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 it;
  - help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.

### **3 Effective learning**

- 3.1 Research tells us that people learn in many different ways, and respond best to different types of input (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic); we must therefore deliver teaching in different ways to address the needs of all our learners. We take into account the different forms of intelligence (e.g. mathematical/logical, visual/spatial, interpersonal, musical) when planning our teaching.
- 3.2 We ensure the best possible environment for learning by developing a positive atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and feel they belong, in which they enjoy being challenged, but in which they enjoy learning, and know that they will succeed (because they know the challenge will have been set at the right level). We therefore on occasions play music to accompany learning, provide 'brain breaks' at

various points in the lesson to refocus children's attention, and make sure that the children have access to drinking water.

3.3 All teaching will be structured to maximise learning opportunities, and lessons will be planned in accordance with the following principles:

- the teaching should build on previous learning ;
- it should give pupils the 'big picture' of the lesson;
- the teacher should explain the learning objectives, and why the lesson is important;
- the lesson should be presented in a range of styles;
- it should allow opportunities for the pupils to build up their own understanding through various activities;
- it should allow opportunities for the children to review what has been learnt;
- it should have built-in opportunities for feedback to the children, celebrating success and reviewing learning strategies;
- the teaching should indicate what the next step in the learning will be.

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

- investigation and problem-solving;
- research and discovery;
- group work;
- pair work;
- independent work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions;
- use of ICT;
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- creative activities;
- watching television and responding to musical or tape-recorded material;
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations;
- designing and making things;
- participation in athletic or physical activity.

3.5 We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way in which they learn, and to reflect on how they learn – what helps them learn, and what makes it difficult for them to learn.

## **4 Effective teaching and learning**

4.1 When we are teaching, we focus on motivating all the children, and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, so that they reach the highest level of personal achievement. We use the school curriculum plan to guide our teaching. This sets out the aims, objectives and values of the school, and details what is to be taught to each year group.

4.2 Building Learning Power (BLP)

We aim to create a culture in classrooms – and in the school more widely – that systematically cultivates habits and attitudes that enable our pupils to become better learners; face challenge and uncertainty calmly, confidently and creatively. BLP aims to enable students to think harder; thus finding learning more enjoyable. We, at ST Mary's, firmly believe in educating pupils for lifelong learning. Enabling pupils to be tenacious and resourceful, imaginative and logical, self-disciplined and self-

aware, collaborative and inquisitive. During lessons 'Learning Detectives' may be applied to watch for other children using BLP strategies successfully.

- 4.3 Teachers make ongoing assessments of each child's progress, and they use this information when planning their lessons. It enables them to take into account the abilities of all their children. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of all our children. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability. When planning work for children with special educational needs, we give due regard to information and targets contained in the children's Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). Teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate for children with disabilities. We value each child as a unique individual, and teachers are familiar with the relevant equal opportunities legislation covering race, gender and disability and all kinds of ability, gifts and talents. We will strive to meet the needs of all our children, and to ensure that we meet all statutory requirements related to matters of inclusion. We strive to provide opportunities for children to develop their particular abilities, gifts or talents. We do this by:
- providing extension activities in class
  - problem solving and investigation tasks.
  - Extra curricula activities in the arts, languages and sports.
  - The School Council and Learning Council (to develop leadership abilities).
  - Allowing children to do presentations on a particular talent.
  - Performances (musical and drama).
  - Area competitive sport.
  - Tapping in to outside agencies with more expertise in a certain area than we have in school.
- 4.4 We set academic targets for the children in each year, and we share these targets with children and their parents/carers. We review the progress of each child at the end of the academic year, and set revised targets.
- 4.5 We plan our lessons with clear learning objectives. We take these objectives from the National Curriculum. Our lesson plans contain information about the tasks to be set, the resources needed, and the way in which we assess the children's work. We evaluate all lessons, so that we can modify and improve our future teaching.
- 4.6 Each of our teachers makes a special effort to establish good working relationships with all the children in the class. We treat the children with kindness and respect. We recognise that they are all individuals with different needs, but we treat them fairly, and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. All of our teachers follow the school policy with regard to discipline and classroom management. We set and agree with children the class code of conduct, and we expect all children to comply with the rules that 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 policy on behaviour.
- 4.7 We try to ensure that all tasks and activities that the children perform are safe. When we plan to take children out of school, we follow a strict set of procedures to ensure safety: the venue is visited, risk assessments are completed, and various permissions are obtained. We inform parents or carers, and obtain their permission, before the visit takes place.
- 4.8 We deploy learning assistants and other adult helpers as effectively as possible. Sometimes, they work with individual children, and sometimes they work with small

groups. Our adult helpers also assist with the preparation and storage of classroom equipment.

- 4.9 Our classrooms are attractive learning environments. We change displays regularly, so that the classroom reflects the topics studied by the children. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display their best work at some time during the year. All classrooms have a range of dictionaries and of both fiction and non-fiction books, as well as displays relating to literacy and numeracy. We also use displays as learning prompts for the children with topic-related word banks. We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning, and that an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources, which results in high-quality work by the children.
- 4.10 All of our teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, and plan their professional development accordingly. We do all we can to support our teachers in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice.
- 4.11 We conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all.
- 4.12 Rewards for Learning

Rewards are a vital part of behaviour management and encouraging positive self-esteem amongst children. Regular praise is used and effort is recognised to help develop a growth mindset.

To encourage team work and responsibility to others children are divided into houses. At St Mary's these are: St David's (yellow) St Patrick's (green), St George's (red) and St Andrew's (blue).

Children may gain house points as a reward of effort or achievement in their class work. Children from Years 1-6 are assigned to a particular house. Year 6 children are elected to be House Captains after a democratic voting process. House Captains should be role models to younger pupils.

## **5 The role of governors**

- 5.1 Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school's approach to teaching and learning. In particular, they:
- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
  - ensure that the school buildings and premises are used optimally to support teaching and learning;
  - check teaching methods in the light of health and safety regulations;
  - seek to ensure that our staff development and our performance management both promote good-quality teaching;
  - monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning approaches through the school's self-review processes, which include reports from subject leaders, the annual headteacher's report to governors, and a review of the in-service training sessions attended by staff.

## **6 The role of parents and carers**

- 6.1 We believe that parents and carers have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents and carers about what and how their children are learning:
- by holding parents' evenings to explain our school strategies for literacy and numeracy;

- by sending information to parents and carers which outlines the topics that the children will be studying during that term at school;
- by sending parents and carers regular reports in which we explain the progress made by each child, and indicate how the child can improve further;
- by explaining to parents and carers how they can support their children with homework, and suggesting, for example, regular shared reading with very young children, and support for older children with their projects and investigative work.

6.2 We believe that parents and carers have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We would therefore like parents and carers:

- to ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible;
- to ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit;
- to do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- to inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour;
- to promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general;
- to fulfil the requirements set out in the home–school agreement.

## **7 Monitoring and review**

7.1 We are aware of the need to monitor the school's teaching and learning policy, and to review it regularly, so that we can take account of new initiatives and research, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. We will therefore review this policy every two years or earlier if necessary.