

St Mary's Infant School Teaching and Learning Policy

The aim of this document is to improve the effectiveness of our teaching by focusing on how children learn.

We believe that the key to successful learning is the importance of high self-esteem and that research (Assessment Reform Group, 1999) indicates that the following factors can improve learning:

- Effective feedback to pupils
- Active involvement of pupils in their own learning
- Adjustment of teaching to take account of the results of assessment
- The need for pupils to assess themselves and understand how to improve
- Age appropriate feedback where pupils see next steps (verbal and/or written)
- A confidence that every child can improve

SCHOOL AIMS

At St Mary's Infant School we aim to establish a supportive working environment in which good learning and teaching flourish. An environment in which children are:

- Highly motivated to achieve through a broad and balanced curriculum to meet the demands of the National Curriculum
- Challenged by high expectations through a variety of teaching strategies
- Encouraged to be active, caring and self-disciplined members of the school and wider community
 - Able to develop spiritual and moral awareness

We believe that pupils are likely to be learning effectively when they are:

- Working in a positive, encouraging and stimulating environment
- Actively involved in their own learning
- Given effective feedback
- Provided with tasks that have been adjusted according to their needs
- Involved in the planning, organisation and evaluation of their work
- Undertaking challenging activities which are appropriate for their age and abilities
- Clear about what they are trying to achieve and how their work can be improved
- Seeking and getting help when needed
- Given opportunities to work in a range of situations e.g. on their own, with a partner, in small groups and in whole class teaching situations
- Well motivated
- Staying on task throughout and maintaining a good work rate
- Self-evaluative and peer assessment
- Able to fully participate
- Encouraged to become independent learners
- Feeling safe
- In good health; both mentally and physically

We believe that pupils are likely to be ineffective in their learning and therefore making less progress than expected when they:

- Are unsure about what they are supposed to be doing
- Are occupied by purposeless teaching activities
- Find work unduly hard, or too easy
- Are unsure how to improve
- Work at too slow or too fast a pace
- Are poorly motivated or working in an unsupportive environment
- Feel afraid to make mistakes
- Have poor mental health
- When they don't feel safe and secure

Planning

- Learning objectives must be clear
- Plans should show any day to day adjustments where needed
- Planned lessons may be adjusted if deemed necessary
- Success Criteria used
- Key questions included
- Appropriate differentiated activities
- Extension activities where appropriate

Sharing Learning Objectives

Where Learning Objectives (LO) are shared, pupil learning, motivation and achievement can be significantly improved. It is important that children know what they must concentrate on and the purpose of the task.

- LO should be in **child-speak** e.g. LO - to explore narrative order and identify and map out the main stages of a story becomes - *'To order your own and other stories'*
- Learning objectives should be separated from the activity instructions. E.g. Can you blend colours rather than Can you paint a rainbow?
- LO are typed on stickers and stuck on pieces of work/ in books.
- LO should be clear and shared with children in all lessons and explained to the children although it can sometimes be of benefit not to give these at start or too early. Vary approaches.
- Tasks must match the LO e.g. Can you find numbers up to 10? May involve children in pairs counting piles of objects and matching them with numeral cards.
- Success criteria should be created by the teacher or with the children, when appropriate, so that the children will know when they have achieved the LO

Pupil Self-Evaluation

- Learners need to be responsible for their own learning and studies have shown that self-evaluation improves achievement. Children will need support in how to do this and responses will need to be modelled throughout the year.
- These sessions should be used to inform planning and help teachers to value pupil's contributions.
- Questions should be linked with the LO

- E.g. *What are you most pleased with about understanding pushes and pulls? What have you learnt about pushes and pulls?*
- A variety of approaches should be used to answer these questions - whole-class responses, group responses, paired response or written individual ones. A balance of all of these approaches should be used.
- Plenary can be used for self-evaluation and to preview/share the next session.

Feedback (Also see MARKING POLICY)

Ensure that the children understand that making mistakes is an important part of learning and helps them to improve.

- Feedback should focus on LO. The main purpose of marking should be to give information to children about how well they have done against the L.
- Marking must be manageable and follow the Marking Policy
- Focus on spelling or handwriting should be done across all areas of the curriculum.
- Only give written feedback on what children were asked to pay attention to.
- Marking should follow the marking code. Useful improvements comments are:
Reminders e.g. What else could you say here?
Scaffolds e.g. What was the dog's tail doing? 'The dog was angry so he....' 'Describe the expression on the dog's face.'
This need not be done on every piece of work
- Shared marking where a piece of work from another class or previous year group is used is also useful.
- Time must be given, at the discretion of the class teacher, for children to be given the chance to make an improvement on the same piece of work where necessary and planning should reflect this day to day adjustment.
- Where work is marked after the lesson, ensure that the children can read comments or there is time set aside for them to have the comment read to them.

Questioning

- Each child should be allocated a talking partner and ideally these will be of a mixed ability. Where children have a talking partner to discuss ideas before offering an idea to the teacher, responses from the class are much greater.
- When asking questions, teachers should endeavour to allow a sufficient amount of thinking time
- Thinking can also take place in small groups.
- Talking partners should be used frequently in all lessons where children are being asked to respond.
- When few children respond to questions talking partners should then be used to improve participation.

A summary and checklist for success

1. Learning objectives should be clear and shared with children in words that they can understand (which may be a spoken)
2. All lessons should involve pupils working on quality activities (differentiated where appropriate).
3. All lessons should involve the teacher being engaged in teaching - initially to the whole class moving towards small group teaching as appropriate.
4. Planning should show clear LO and be based on NC and school policies. It should show adjustment based upon an assessment of the children's needs.
5. A plenary should end each lesson where teachers and pupils should reflect upon the extent to which the LO has been met.
6. Children should be involved in self-evaluation against learning objectives.
7. Oral and written feedback should be focused around LO and where marking is in more depth teachers should follow the marking code.
8. Children's self-esteem should be raised via the language we use and the ways we celebrate achievement.
9. Children need to be clear about current standards of achievement and know what they need to do to improve their work.
10. All children should be encouraged to ask and answer questions and talking partners should be used to facilitate full participation.

11. Pupils should be encouraged to become independent learners who are able to select and organise materials for the task in hand and to work with sustained concentration.

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