

St Michael's C of E School



Teaching and Learning Policy

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Type of Policy	Non-Statutory
Frequency of Review	Annual
Governor Committee	Curriculum Committee

#together

Two are better than one...
If either of them falls down,
one can help the other up.
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

At St Michael's School we aim to provide consistently high-quality teaching and learning opportunities for our children, where they are taught the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. We can achieve this by ensuring that these high standards are implemented throughout the school by all staff, experienced and less experienced alike. All staff must ensure that all aspects of this policy are implemented. Working #together is the best way to ensure high standards are met for our children. We aim to be ambitious in our approach to the curriculum, providing challenge for all children.

Our high standards will be monitored regularly and support put in place for members of staff who are struggling to meet these expectations. When making new appointments to the school, recruitment panels must aim to identify the skills required that are consistent with the demands of working at St Michael's School.

Our Teaching and Learning Policy was written collaboratively by teachers at St Michael's School. School Leaders use this policy to identify strengths within lessons and areas for development.

Knowledge and Skills Based Learning

The focus of every lesson must be knowledge and skills based. The knowledge and skills being taught must be made clear to the children during the lesson. It is likely that, but not always, this is shared with the children on the Interactive Whiteboard or written in their exercise books as a WALT (We Are Learning To) or WALA (We Are Learning About). In order for knowledge and skills to be embedded, each WALT/WALA must be knowledge/skills based rather than task or activity based. This ensures progression for all pupils, enabling them to know more and remember more so that they can do more.

Role of Teaching Assistants, including Higher Level Teaching Assistants

Our Teaching Assistants (TAs) play a vital and valued role in supporting our children in their development of knowledge and skills, especially those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged, such as our children with SEND and those who are entitled to Pupil Premium. TAs must sit in close proximity to children to support learning at all times. They should never have a passive role within the classroom. During teacher inputs, they should be sitting alongside children, reinforcing the teacher's sharing of knowledge and skills by making notes or dealing with pupil misconceptions. Alternatively, TAs can be sitting out of the class, pre-teaching a small group of children or supporting a half class whilst the teacher leads a differentiated input with the other half. They might also be leading interventions outside of the classroom, employing a forensic approach to address gaps in pupil knowledge, for example 'an appropriate reading intervention'. It is the class teacher's responsibility to line manage their TA and facilitate this style of teaching and learning. It is vital that teachers take on this role to ensure effective use of TA time within their classroom.

If there are two adults in the room, at the end of the teacher's input to the class, one of the adults must stay in a static position to work and support a identified focus group to ensure that knowledge and skills are embedded. The role of working with a focus group is interchangeable between the classteacher and the TA whilst always being aware that the classteachers should work with the most vulnerable pupils for

significant periods of the day. Care must be taken to ensure that the children receiving focused support in this way are rotated. In Key Stage One, both adults will work with a group of children.

It is essential that TAs know what is expected of them before the lesson takes place. Planning should be shared with TAs beforehand. TAs should have a paper copy of the planning in hand that they can refer to during the lessons to ensure that they are following the plan accurately.

There should never be a situation where both adults in the room are 'helicoptering', moving around the room supporting children just a few seconds at a time. At St Michael's School we consider it absolutely vital that all staff within the classroom have a clearly defined role in the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

It is the role of some TAs to support a named child with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). However, supporting them all the time does not promote independence. Classteachers need to direct their TAs to find a balance between being overly supportive and not giving the child with the EHCP the help they need.

Our curriculum should be ambitious and provide challenge for all our children. School staff should not 'dumb down' the knowledge and skills taught to our disadvantaged and vulnerable children but provide scaffolding, vocabulary, pre-teaching, firsthand experiences etc so that all children can have equal access to the curriculum.

Use of Worksheets

At St Michaels' School, we believe that the use of worksheets can severely restrict the academic development of children.

Classteachers must provide children with unrestricted opportunities to write across the curriculum, so that knowledge and skills from their writing can be embedded into long term memory across the curriculum. Teachers need to be creative in planning and think how they can avoid using worksheets to meet the desired outcome.

Scaffolding sheets should prompt/support writing and should not restrict writing or personal expression.

Marking and Feedback

See the Marking and Feedback Policy for further clarification.

Feedback on pupils' work can come in the form of both teacher marking and direct verbal feedback. The most effective form of feedback is when it is completed alongside the child, however, this is not always possible for every child in every lesson. Verbal feedback is an incredibly powerful tool in helping children to embed knowledge and skills into long term memory. When supporting children, teachers are asked to record 'VF' in the children's book. Classteachers have a responsibility to ensure feedback is acted upon and developed as part of classroom culture, to ensure new knowledge has been embedded and there are no skills gaps. Teachers need to make time to allow this to happen. Teachers should insist on high standards, ensuring that comments in relation to presentation are acted upon and not repeated in the future.

Independent Learners

At St Michael's School, it is our intention to create classes of independent learners, who develop the skills required to learn, without the need for continued adult involvement. This process begins in Early Years, where the skillful use of continuous provision supports early independence and children making choices about their own learning and this continues into Key Stage One.

Each of our classrooms display the 'Five Bs' in a prominent place so that children can refer to them if they get stuck. The 'Five Bs' are:

- B=Brain
- B=Book
- B=Board
- B=Buddy
- B=Boss

The aim is for children to be able to resolve learning challenges they face independently without being over reliant on the teacher for help. We do not want to lose valuable learning time with children waiting with hands up or queuing up to see a teacher.

Our classrooms are well resourced and must provide easy access to tools and equipment that will support learning. This includes resources such as dictionaries, word mats, thesauruses, number lines, hundred squares and multiplication tables. More details on this can be found in the Display and Classroom Organisation Policy. Class teachers are encouraged to hold discussions with their Team Leaders when they feel resources that would add value to learning are absent from the classroom, so that they can be purchased.

Creating Active and Engaged Learners

At St Michael's School, we believe that learning should not just happen to children. We feel strongly that children should be presented with active opportunities to gain new knowledge and skills. We expect our teachers to plan and prepare lessons that not only embed knowledge and skills but also stimulate imagination and creativity. We want our children's natural curiosity to be stimulated so that they feel their learning has a real-life purpose. Lessons need opportunities for children to have an active role. Children who are passive during lessons will become bored and disengaged, which will result in poor behaviour, slow progress and reduce the chances of knowledge and skills being retained in the long term. At St Michael's School, we value the importance of practical and 'hands-on' learning opportunities as we feel that memorable learning experiences embed the knowledge and skills from lessons, ensuring that children can remember more and establish transferable skills that can be used across the curriculum, especially when links are made between subjects and topics so that knowledge can be embedded into long term memory.

Teachers need to ensure that lesson inputs are short, sharp and focused. Even with our older children, these should rarely be over 15 minutes in length to enable children to demonstrate positive learning behaviours. After this time, interest wanes, concentration deteriorates, and the impact of the input devalues. Inputs need to be succinct, providing children with the opportunity to share their prior knowledge with the classteacher, their class and their 'Talk Partners'. All lessons begin with a retrieval activity to support children in retaining prior learning. This recall of knowledge has a significant impact in embedding knowledge into long term memory. Teachers are encouraged to be creative in their inputs to maximise the value of this time. Staff support children in developing meta cognitive strategies to develop their recall and retention.

Use of Questioning

Questioning is an essential part of the learning process. Not only does it give children the opportunity to share and recall their knowledge, it also gives teachers the chance to assess the children's level of understanding. Open questions are pivotal to the success of lessons. Ambitious questions are also used to build on the children's answers and allow for deeper thinking and further challenge. Teachers need to give all children the opportunity to answer questions asked, using a variety of techniques to select children. Children are expected to listen, pay close attention and remain fully engaged at all times as they could be asked a question at any time. Getting children to answer questions can be achieved by class teachers using lolly sticks with the children's name on. Lolly sticks, marked with a coloured dot, allow teachers to differentiate the questioning to meet the needs of individuals and groups of children but must avoid 'dumbing down' questions to disadvantaged / vulnerable children. Teachers must also challenge misconceptions immediately, to prevent these becoming embedded.

Meta Cognition

Metacognition is the awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes. At St Michaels we support the development of this awareness using visual characters - 'The Think Aloud Crowd' to help the children remember the fundamental components of metacognition. These characters support the children to make connections, make predictions, ask relevant and insightful questions, visualise thoughts and ideas, look for clues and to review and reflect on their learning.

The characters are displayed in all classrooms and in children's books as a reminder of the strategies they are encouraged to use to develop their independent and flexible thinking skills. The use of these skills should be seen across the curriculum and children should confidently identify where and how they are employing these strategies.

High Expectations of Pupils

Teachers are expected to provide a high level of challenge for all children in terms of learning, behaviour (including learning behaviours) and presentation of their work and themselves. They must use the Behaviour Policy to eliminate low level disruption that has an impact on both concentration and pupil's learning output. Whilst the children are working, the volume within the classroom should be kept low. Pupil presentation

expectations must remain consistently high, and poor-quality presentation needs to be challenged. It is essential that teachers use the correct terminology to equip the children with an ambitious range of vocabulary, that is regularly revisited.

We expect our children to be able to articulate what they are learning and why it is important that they develop this knowledge or skill. Our children need to know where this fits in with previous learning and how this will be useful to them to the future.

Knowledge Wall and Sentence Stacking Displays

Each classroom must have a Knowledge Wall for Maths and English. Classrooms require a Sentence Stacking display to model writing. It is essential that this is added to regularly to reflect the new learning that has taken place and to assist with recall of previous knowledge. Knowledge Walls provide a commentary of the learning that has taken place in the classroom in recent days, ensuring children remember more. It may include examples and explanations of calculations or demonstrations of the correct use of grammar and punctuation. Knowledge Walls should be referred to and utilised throughout lessons and may be added to by teachers, teaching assistants or students. Please see the Display Policy for further details on Knowledge Walls.

Vocabulary Walls

High level vocabulary, previously discussed with children, such as words used in current whole class reading texts is displayed on vocabulary walls.

Both knowledge walls and vocabulary walls need to be updated and maintained regularly to remain relevant within the classroom. They are a valuable asset in supporting children to remember more, so that they know more and can then do more.

Use of Practical Resources in Maths

Essential to our teaching of Maths Mastery, is our use of high-quality practical resources. We strongly believe that children will embed mathematical concepts more effectively when they are able to use hands-on, practical resources to support them. Using the mathematical process of 'Concrete, Pictorial + Abstract' regularly, supports children to develop a better understanding of the mathematical concepts taught. Children need to have the skills of using these resources demonstrated to them regularly over time, so that knowledge of how to use them can be recalled. Please see the Maths Policy for further details on the use of practical resources in maths.

Monitoring

Monitoring of our Teaching and Learning Policy (Book monitoring, Pupil Voice, Planning Scrutiny etc) will be undertaken by classteachers, subject leaders, members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and by School Governors when undertaking classroom visits (NB: Governors do not make professional judgements on the quality of teaching and learning). Classroom visits may be part of formal lesson observations, learning walks or subject monitoring visits. The outcomes of these visits may result in the inclusion of objectives as part of a member of staff's appraisal targets. Feedback will always be given when members of the SLT undertake any monitoring activity.

Oracy

Oracy is a vital part of our Teaching and Learning as it improves the capacity to communicate clearly, the ability to articulate thoughts and ideas eloquently, and the confidence to speak in a wide range of contexts that are fundamental to success in school and life.

Oracy is taught through four strands: physical, linguistic, cognitive and social and emotional (as seen on the Oracy Framework). These skills will enable successful discussion, inspiring speech and effective communication. Oracy is taught as part of the curriculum and embedded into lessons through talk strategies and activities to enable pupils to gain greater confidence in presentational and exploratory talk.

Oracy skills are displayed in all classroom and are explicitly taught and referred to throughout classroom practice. By doing this, the aims are to benefit pupil's confidence in all curriculum areas, enhance pupils writing ability, enable children to gain confidence with public speaking and support pupils through school transition.

All classteachers must use Talk Partners effectively in their classroom to allow children to verbalise their thinking to one another, using oracy techniques that are taught and modelled by the classteacher. These can be of similar or mixed ability pairs. Talk Partners should be changed regularly to provide variation for the children.

Booster Groups and Tutoring

Support for small groups and individuals is a highly prized resource. Classteachers need to plan extremely carefully how this funding is going to be used to ensure it is carefully directed to the children who need it the most and forensic in its approach. Classteachers need to review assessment information, for example the Question Level Analysis on Smartgrade assessments or Little Wandle Phonics assessments and highlight the exact targets within English and Maths that children need support with. This information is then shared with staff delivering interventions so that they can plan the appropriate lesson content. Classteachers need to check regularly with staff delivering interventions to discuss pupil progress and monitor attendance.

Appendix A - Monitoring form for members of staff conducting learning walks of Teaching and Learning

Area of teaching	What this will look like	Feedback and next steps
Skills and Knowledge Based Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge or Skills based WALT/WALA • In Learning Journals, children should identify the subject in their WALT e.g. History WALT/WALA, RE WALT/WALA • Retrieval Activity • Building and recapping on previous learning • Embed/revise key vocab and knowledge • Knowledge – something new learnt in every lesson • Opportunity to apply and develop skills • Children are able to articulate how their current learning fits into their learning journey 	
Role of adults Including support for PP and SEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAs working with children - pre-teaching, working with a group, sitting with individual child and whiteboard/resources, sitting with a small group with whiteboard/resources 	
Assessment for learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of assessment to adapt lesson where necessary 	
Independent Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we do when we are stuck – the five Bs • Resources to support independence 	
Active learning Use of Questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active learning – especially during inputs • Variety of strategies for gaining pupil responses – lolly sticks or similar • Effective talk partners • Limit time for input / teacher talk • Stem sentences used across the curriculum-children answer in full sentence. • Modelling • Oracy opportunities 	
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncluttered classrooms • Effective knowledge walls for English and Maths working • Sentence stacking display for writing • Inviting and engaging reading corners 	

High expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge • Effective behaviour management • Positive learning behaviours demonstrated • High levels of engagement of all children • Presentation in all aspects 	
Other Comments		

Appendix B Monitoring form for members of staff looking at books

Area of teaching	What this will look like	Feedback and next steps
Marking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to date • Effective and relevant 	
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of age-appropriate vocabulary • Evidence of adventurous and challenging vocabulary 	
Lesson Sequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of sequential building of knowledge and skills 	
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date • WALT/WALA • Handwriting • Evidence of pride taken in work 	
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage of our Unique Ambitious Curriculum appropriate for each Year group which builds on prior learning • Evidence of cross curricular writing opportunities with high standards of written English being maintained across all learning 	
Other comments		

