

ST MARY MAGDALENE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY



‘Growing Together in Faith & Love’

September 2025

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain how we create an environment at our school where pupils learn best and love to do so
- Summarise expectations to make sure everyone is committed to achieving a consistent approach to teaching and learning across our school
- Promote high expectations and raising standards of achievement for all pupils in our school
- Involve pupils, parents and the wider school community in pupils' learning and development

2. Our guiding principles

At St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School Primary School we are committed to providing a broad and balanced curriculum where all children are inspired and motivated to learn.

Our children are **valued** for their individuality, encouraged to be **aspirational** and are **proud** of their effort and achievements. All achievements are celebrated in the school community.

At St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School we believe in building strong foundations from which the children can grow and develop into positive, resilient, happy people who are ready to embark on their journey into secondary school. We have high expectations and encourage the children to aim high by concentrating on the small steps that lead to success. Our curriculum offer is accessible to all, we are an inclusive school who believe that all children can achieve and reach their own unique potentials. We celebrate diversity and work together with parents and the wider community to support the children in our school. We endeavour to foster creativity and develop children's imagination and we place children's wellbeing at the centre of all we do. We believe bringing the curriculum alive with visits, trips and visitors to school enhances learning so we offer a 'wide' programme to all our pupils.

Our Vision and Aims

- To promote purposeful and relevant learning opportunities which enable children to embrace technological change and become global citizens.
- To foster an environment whereby happiness and wellbeing is at the centre of everything we do.
- To strengthen our relationships further and work collaboratively with parent/carers and the community in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for children.
- To develop confident, independent, resilient learners who have a growth mindset and are confident to take risks.
- To promote food growing and sustainability so children understand the important role they have in caring for our planet.

We believe pupils learn best at our school when they:

- Know God loves them and created them
- When staff know them and treat them with respect and dignity
- Have their basic physical needs met
- Feel secure, safe and valued
- Feel a sense of belonging
- Are engaged and motivated
- Can see the relevance of what they are doing
- Know what outcome is intended
- Can link what they are doing to other experiences
- Understand the task
- Have the physical space and the tools needed
- Have access to the necessary materials
- Are not disrupted or distracted by others
- Can work with others or on their own, depending on the task
- Are guided, taught or helped in appropriate ways at appropriate times
- Can practise what they are learning
- Can apply the learning in both familiar and new contexts
- Can persevere when learning is hard
- Can manage their emotions if things are not going well
- Recognise that all learners make mistakes and mistakes can help us learn

3. Roles and responsibilities

Teaching and learning in our school is a shared responsibility, and everyone in our school community has an important role to play.

This is how we will create the above conditions for pupils' learning at all times:

3.1 Teachers

Teachers at our school will:

- Follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct as set out in the [Teachers' Standards](#)

- Actively engage parents/carers in their child's learning for example curriculum newsletters, school website, letters, and sharing assemblies, including clearly communicating the purpose of home learning
- Update parents/carers on pupils' progress during parents' evenings and if there are any concerns whenever they arise, and produce a written annual report on their child's progress
- Meet the expectations set out in the behaviour policy.

3.2 Support staff

Support staff at our school will:

- Know pupils well and differentiate support to meet their individual learning needs
- Support teaching and learning with flexibility and resourcefulness
- Use agreed assessment for learning strategies
- Use effective marking and feedback as required
- Feedback observations of pupils to teachers
- Ask questions to make sure they've understood expectations for learning
- Identify and use resources to support learning
- Have high expectations and celebrate achievement
- Demonstrate and model themselves as learners
- Meet the expectations set out in the behaviour policy.

3.3 Subject leaders

Subject leaders at our school will:

- Help to create well-sequenced, broad and balanced curriculum plans that build knowledge and skills
- Sequence lessons in a way that allows pupils to make good progress from their starting points
- Resource their subject (within financial limitations), providing teachers and pupils with necessary resources for learning
- Drive improvement in their subject/phase, working with teachers to identify any challenges
- Timetable their subject to allocate time for pupils to:
 - Achieve breadth and depth
 - Fully understand the topic
 - Demonstrate excellence

- Moderate progress across their subject/phase by, for example, systematically reviewing progress against a range of evidence and reviewing qualitative and quantitative performance data
- Improve on weaknesses identified in their monitoring activities
- Create and share clear intentions for their subject/phase
- Encourage teachers to share ideas, resources and good practice
- Meet the expectations set out in the behaviour policy, and marking and feedback policy.

3.4 **Senior leaders**

Senior leaders at our school will:

- Have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education to all
- Celebrate achievement and have high expectations for everyone
- Hold staff and pupils to account for their teaching and learning
- Plan and evaluate strategies to secure high-quality teaching and learning across the school
- Manage resources to support high-quality teaching and learning
- Provide support and guidance to other staff through coaching and mentoring
- Input and monitor the impact of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to improve staff's practice and subject knowledge
- Promote team working at all levels, for example by buddying teachers up to support one another where appropriate
- Address underachievement and intervene promptly
- Meet the expectations set out in the behaviour policy, and marking and feedback policy.

3.5 **Pupils**

Pupils at our school will:

- Take responsibility for their own learning, and support the learning of others
- Meet expectations for good behaviour for learning at all times, respecting the rights of others to learn
- Attend every day and be ready to learn, with any necessary equipment for the lesson
- Be curious, ambitious, engaged and confident learners
- Know how to improve
- Put maximum effort and focus into their work
- Complete home learning activities as required
- Meet the expectations set out in the behaviour policy.

3.6 **Parents and carers**

Parents and carers of pupils at our school will:

- Value learning
- Encourage their child as a learner
- Make sure their child is ready and able to learn every day
- Support good attendance
- Participate in discussions about their child's progress and attainment
- Communicate with the school to share information promptly
- Encourage their child to take responsibility for their own learning
- Support and give importance to home learning

3.7 **Governors**

Governors at our school will:

- Monitor that resources and funding are allocated effectively to support the school's approach to teaching and learning
- Monitor the impact of teaching and learning strategies on pupils' progress and attainment
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation
- Make sure other school policies promote high-quality teaching, and that these are being implemented

4. **Planning**

Planning is a process not a product. It has one purpose; to enable high quality delivery which enables all pupils to learn.

Across all curriculum areas, subject leaders have created curriculum overviews and progression of knowledge and skills documents that show the key knowledge and vocabulary that should be taught in each key stage. These have been carefully matched to the National Curriculum expectations and ensure excellent coverage of all curriculum areas.

Planning is designed to review prior learning and support our pupils to make connections with new learning that deepens core concepts within each discrete subject area. Teachers focus lessons around core objectives and use meaningful experiences and activities to strengthen understanding and long-term memory.

- We use the Read Write Inc, Get Spelling and Literacy Shed to teach English.

- For maths we use White Rose, and Maths Mastery and White Rose which all support the deep understanding of key concepts.
- Our RE curriculum follows the National Catholic syllabus.
- The Kapow schemes of work have been tailored to support the teaching of Art and DT.
- In history and geography we use Oxford Owl.
- We follow RWI phonics scheme to support early reading and phonics.
- For computing we use Purple Mash.
- We use the Plymouth scheme for science.
- For PE we use PE Complete which is lessons and themes for every year group which is adapted to meet the needs of our pupils.
- Music is delivered through Sparkyard and enhanced by Milton Keynes Music Service hub.
- Italian is taught with a scheme designed by the Italian Consulate.

At St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School we enable all teachers in each phase to meet together on a weekly basis for their PPA time. All teachers need to be clear and precise about the knowledge/skills they want pupils to learn in every lesson. PPA time is mainly be used for hard thinking, discussion and the creation of resources as opposed to form filling. Teachers should spend time thinking about what they want pupils to learn first before they consider what you want them to do. The questions teachers need to ask when planning a lesson are:

1. Where are the pupils starting from?
2. Where do you want them to get to?
3. How will you know when they are there?
4. How can you best help them get there?

5. **Teaching**

At St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School our teaching and learning philosophy is based on the importance that children need to 'know more and remember more'. Teachers need to understand working memory and long-term knowledge retention. Therefore, underpinning our curriculum design is the assertion that children need a solid understanding of core knowledge if they are going to progress in their learning.

We also believe in the Responsive Teaching Approach. This involves:

1. Setting clear goals and planning learning carefully
2. Identifying what pupils have understood and where they are struggling
3. Responding, adapting our teaching to support pupils to do better.

At St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School, we value each teacher's creativity and flair so we do not have prescriptive methods of teaching each lesson. What a 'typical lesson' will look like will vary from subject to subject and individual teachers may utilise a variety of strategies based upon their professional judgement and knowledge. However, it is expected that the following high-quality teaching strategies based on current pedagogical research are used effectively in all lessons.

Challenge

We have high expectations of all pupils all of the time. It is good for pupils to be challenged. Learning begins as soon as they arrive in the classroom and for the whole school day.

Explanation

Teacher instruction should be planned with awareness of demands on pupils' cognitive load, by presenting new material in small steps. Examples include:

1. Limiting the amount of material pupils receive at one time
2. Giving clear and simple instructions and explanations
3. Thinking aloud and model steps
4. Using more time to provide explanation and provide many examples
5. Re-teaching as necessary.

Modelling

Teach to the top with expert instruction and modelling.

To learn how to do something, pupils need to watch and listen to experts guide them through the process, step by step, before they try themselves. Modelling supports explanation and can help pupils to make abstract ideas concrete. Examples include:

1. Demonstrating the worked activity in front of pupils
2. Thinking aloud to show the thought process
3. Showing it is ok to make a mistake and empathy, e.g. I found this bit challenging too
4. Integrating quick fire questioning e.g. why am I doing this now?

Guided practice with scaffolding

Using worked examples and scaffolding to support all pupils to demonstrate their learning e.g. sentence starters, key word definitions, procedural steps visible etc. Effective class discussion and questioning can happen at this stage

Independent, deliberate practise

Pupils should be provided with the time they need to practise new material in a number of ways in order to master it. Scaffolding should be reduced or removed for the majority of pupils. This is the component that will look the most different across curriculum areas, but all practice should be careful, deliberate and challenging.

Additionally, in order to ensure that pupils are engaged in learning and remember more the following strategies are used across the school:

- Expectation that teachers use every opportunity to revisit prior knowledge
- Clear explanations and modelling during lessons
- In KS1 a book talk grid to discuss the book when the class has finished
- In KS1, all classes follow the same sequence of phonics with spellings for each year group.
- A focus on key vocabulary in all lessons.
- Opportunities for children to discuss, either with each other or as a class
- The use of verbal feedback, live marking, self-assessment and peer assessment in KS2
- History timelines in each class that should be referred to during History lessons
- The use of the 'Big Question' at the beginning and end of each Geography and History topic.
- Breaking learning down into chunks and recapping constantly before moving on. This is especially true for phonics and maths
- Following a maths mastery/mastering number approach in maths, whereby the learning is carefully sequenced and in small steps
- Teachers use retrieval materials for History, Geography and Science as Early Morning work • The use of Blooket, particularly in KS2 on Chrome books to consolidate learning
- Occasional quick-fire questions at the end of lessons.

It is important that teachers, support staff and pupils are all clear about the key learning that will take place in a lesson. Teachers should make learning objectives explicit to pupils and pupils should be able to explain what the key learning of the lesson is.

Teachers should ensure that learning has stuck, by checking for understanding. All teachers should confidently and accurately use teaching techniques to gather a secure overview about whether the key learning has actually been learnt. If learning is not yet secure for pupils the lesson should be adapted or retaught differently.

To support responsive teaching teachers can use:

Questioning

Effective teachers ask a large number of questions skilfully, as questioning is our main tool to probe, check and extend pupil understanding.

Teachers should ask lots of questions, to lots of pupils, and then use what they learn from this process to adapt and reshape teaching within and between lessons.

Staff are encouraged to use a range of questioning styles in their teaching. This may be dependent on the subject they are teaching or the intended outcome of the questioning approach. Staff at St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School can be observed to use the following range of strategies in a range of lessons.

- Multiple choice questions
- Reframing questions
- Other questioning strategies used to check for understanding and to deepen thinking may include:
 - The use of socratic questioning (i.e. probing for answers)
 - Metacognitive strategies such as ‘why do you think that’ or ‘can you explain why that is?’
 - Administering a shock: ‘what if the opposite were true?’ ‘what if ...had never existed?’
 - An inquisitive role: ‘why does that work like that?’ ‘what if the opposite were true?’ ‘when could that be possible?’

Retrieval Practice

Retrieval is a learning strategy that should be used regularly in lessons to support pupils with retrieving material that they have previously learnt from their long-term memory. Planned retrieval activities are low stakes and will vary throughout the week. Examples of the strategies we use at St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School include:

- The use of quizzes – including Accelerated Reader quizzes
- Answering questions aloud
- Peer discussion
- Working in groups to encourage curiosity and debate

Effective feedback

Feedback exists in many forms (e.g. teacher marking of exercise books, whole class marking sheets, verbal feedback, peer and self-assessment), but what matters is what pupils do with it. Effective feedback should:

- Be frequent and timely
- Always generate action and should be more work for the pupil than the teacher.
- Be specific and focused on the most prominent areas to improve.
- Be accompanied by support in how to be successful and the next step

The Early Years Policy has more details on teaching and learning.

6. Learning environment

When pupils are at school, learning will take place in classrooms, outdoor spaces, the school halls, intervention rooms.

These spaces will be kept safe, clean and ready for pupils to use them.

They will be arranged to promote learning through:

- Clearly labelled, comfortable and attractive zones such as reading corners and quiet areas
- Posters of material pupils have previously learned about and can identify
- Accessible resources for learning such as books, worksheets and other equipment
- A seating layout that allows everyone to see the board and participate
- Displays that celebrate and support pupils' learning

7. Adaptive Teaching

Teaching and learning at our school will take the backgrounds, needs and abilities of all pupils into account. We allow all pupils to access learning and succeed with even the most challenging content if scaffolded appropriately. We will adapt our teaching methods to support learning to cater to the needs of all of our pupils, including:

- Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
- Disadvantaged pupils
- Pupils that are most able.

Along with adaptive teaching methods we also:

- Use support staff effectively to provide extra support
- Working with our SEN coordinator (SENCO), our pupils with SEND, and their parents to establish the appropriate level of material to support these pupils to make good progress
- Provide tutoring to support disadvantaged children and those who need extra intervention
- Have a reading ambassador scheme whereby the lowest 20% of readers are paired up with a parent reader who has received training from the Reading leads.

Further information can be found in our School's Adaptive Teaching document.

8. Home learning

Home learning, or homework, will support pupils to make the link between what they have learnt in school and the wider world. It's most effective when done in a supportive, secure environment, with focused time set aside.

Home learning will be reasonable in challenge and length, and its purpose will be clearly outlined alongside each task.

9. Marking and feedback

Feedback will clearly explain to pupils what they're doing well and what they need to do next to continue to improve their work and inform the teacher of a child's attainment and therefore inform future planning.

At St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School we believe that marking and feedback must be used to benefit the children and move learning on and will be given weekly through the following possible methods:

- Live feedback within a lesson
- Written feedback (delayed marking)
- Peer marking
- Self-marking
- Whole class feedback
- Small group and one-one conferencing

The Marking and Feedback gives further information about the way in which this is carried out. Copies of the marking and feedback policy is available from the school office.

10. Assessment, recording and reporting

We will track pupils' progress using a combination of formative and summative assessment. We use comparative judgement in two ways: in the tasks we set and in comparing pupils' work over time. All subjects are assessed at the end of blocks or units through the use of teacher assessment, end of topic tests or big questions.

We provide termly verbal reports for parents at termly parents evenings. Pupils will receive a written report annually.

11. Monitoring and evaluation

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

School leaders, subject leaders and external visits will monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning through:

- Conducting learning walks
- Reviewing marking and feedback

- Termly pupil progress meetings
- Gathering input from the school council
- Book looks
- Talking to children about their work
- Lesson observations

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

13. Links with other policies

This policy links with the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour policy
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Equalities and SEN policies
- Marking and feedback policy
- Home-school agreement
- Adaptive Teaching