

CHRIST CHURCH C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNING and TEACHING POLICY



RATIONALE

Enabling children to learn effectively is our core purpose as a school. It follows that the way that we approach teaching and learning will be fundamental to success, and it will be crucial both to understand how children learn best and to be able to apply this knowledge to ensure that teaching strategies have the greatest chance of facilitating and enhancing this learning.

This policy is an attempt to summarise all that we have learnt as a school about what constitutes best practice in teaching and how best to ensure that learning outcomes can be fully realised and levels of success maximal for all children. It is intended to be a working document to support teachers in their practice and to make explicit our expectations of ourselves and of our children. It is linked to, and informed by, other key school policies.

WHAT IS LEARNING?

Learning is about the acquisition of new knowledge, new skills, new perspectives and new insights. One all-embracing single definition is hard to synthesise, but Mike Hughes (A Policy for Learning, ETS, 2003) defines four key principles of learning:

- Learning involves making **personal sense** of information and experiences.
- We make sense by making **connections** between what we already know and new inputs.
- Learning is therefore an **active process, done by people, not to them.**
- Learning is essentially a **reflective** process.

Successful teaching will always have its roots in a sound understanding of how children learn, selecting strategies that take one or more of these key principles into account. Staff at Christ Church Primary School will therefore be continually looking to develop their own understanding of how children learn and how to apply their knowledge to continually enhance their own practice. They will also seek to build the children's understanding of themselves as learners, and how to use that knowledge to facilitate their own learning.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO EFFECTIVE LEARNING

Staff at Christ Church School recognise the significance of the following factors in ensuring optimal conditions for learning to take place:

- A stimulating, organised, calm learning environment is created and maintained.
- A variety of teaching strategies are employed, taking account of a range of learning styles.
- Learning experiences are carefully and thoroughly planned, incorporating clear learning objectives that define unambiguously what children are expected to learn.
- High expectations of both pupils and teachers (of themselves and of each other) are consistently applied.

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- The principles of sound and realistic inclusive practice are understood, valued and carefully followed.
- Challenging yet realistic targets are set and progress in achieving these is monitored closely. Assessment of progress feeds directly into defining the next steps in learning.
- Wherever possible, enrichment activities broaden and enhance learning across the curriculum.
- Pupil motivation is worked at and positively encouraged, not taken for granted.

CLASSROOM ETHOS

Staff will work hard to establish an ethos within their classroom that is characterised by mutual respect and warm relationships. The following features will be clearly apparent:

- A relaxed but controlled atmosphere, based on clear routines and practices consistently applied, and firmly focussed on learning.
- All children are aware that their achievements are valued, whilst being continually challenged to aspire to even greater success.
- All children are consistently encouraged to be independent, yet co-operative.
- Staff employ a range of strategies to promote motivation, enthusiasm, self-confidence and emotional intelligence.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Sound planning is recognised as a crucial component of delivering the best quality learning experiences to pupils. All teachers will therefore make careful planning a core part of their work and will be provided with appropriate preparation, planning and assessment time to make this possible.

Planning will take place at three levels: Long term, medium term and short term.

- A copy of the long term curriculum map for the school will be maintained centrally. On an annual basis, Subject Leaders will review its accuracy and carry out any revisions to their subject in the light of any recent developments in the curriculum.
- All class teachers will maintain medium term plans outlining key objectives to be covered over that term or half term. The nature of the Foundation Stage curriculum will mean that Foundation Stage staff may produce shorter, more frequent medium term plans, to give them the flexibility to respond to the children's needs and interests.
- Class teachers will also maintain short term plans which detail on a daily basis learning objectives to be met over a week and how these will be achieved.

Clearly defined, SMART learning objectives will provide the key link between medium and short term planning. The following features will also be identifiable in either medium or short term planning for each subject where appropriate:

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- A clear three-part structure to all lessons, including an introduction, main activity and plenary;
- Links to previous learning;
- Differentiation for key learning groups such as SEN, MAGAT, EAL pupils;
- Clearly defined success criteria and assessment opportunities;
- Links to IEPs and any other personalised learning plans, and to children's learning targets;
- Deployment of a range of teaching strategies and resources to take account of different learning styles;
- Details of the deployment of support staff and notes to guide their activity;
- Appropriate higher-order questions which will be used to challenge and extend thinking;
- Identified links with other subjects and highlighted opportunities for incorporating ICT;
- Thoughtful and reflective evaluation of significant lessons, in particular in Literacy and Numeracy.

CHARACTERISTICS AND ORGANISATION OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The quality of the learning environment will have a major impact on the degree of successful learning that takes place. The following features will therefore be crucial to maximising that learning:

- Consistent maintenance of a calm and purposeful atmosphere.
- Maintenance of an orderly environment, where resources can be readily located and are organised in an efficient and tidy manner.
- Use of a range of displays that are interactive in nature and which promote and/or enhance children's learning across a broad range of curricular areas.
- Recognition that maintenance of the environment is the responsibility of all and that all (including the children) must play an active part in sustaining an environment of high quality.

ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

- All children will be challenged to the limits of their ability, including MAGAT, SEN and EAL children.
- Learning experiences will take account of current research and understanding relating to good practice, will be activity-based and interactive in nature, and will relate learning wherever possible to real life.
- Wherever possible, enrichment experiences will be provided to enhance the curriculum. These may include school journeys and trips, visiting speakers or representatives from organisations providing in-house enrichment opportunities, such as musicians, artists, specialist coaches or individuals with particular relevant skills or experiences, joint activities with other schools, or activities provided by the LA such as classes for G&T pupils.

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- Teachers will consistently aspire to excellence in their teaching, and seek to be outstanding practitioners. They will seek to be creative and imaginative, stimulating and inspirational in their approach in order to engage and motivate pupils as fully as possible.
- The school will seek to deploy and develop support staff in such a way as to maximise their impact on pupil learning, in collaboration with teaching staff, continually reviewing current systems to ensure that pupils benefit from this resource as fully as possible.
- A designated member of staff will lead and manage each area of the curriculum, ensuring that they are knowledgeable, up to date with developments in that area, and fully informed about standards within the school to enable them to plan with Development Teams for future improvement and development.
- The curriculum will be designed and regularly reviewed to be both consistent with the requirements of the National Curriculum and to reflect the need to prepare children to be active and successful adult citizens, ready and willing to contribute positively to the society in which they will find themselves on maturity.
- Wherever possible, links will be made across different strands of the curriculum in order to maximise learning outcomes and to develop understanding and skills across a range of contexts.
- Teachers, support staff and pupils will have consistently high expectations of themselves and others. Every individual will be consistently encouraged to do their best and to seek to develop and grow in their respective gifts and abilities. Success will be recognised, celebrated and rewarded appropriately.
- Given that ICT has become integral to every aspect of twenty-first century life, the school will continually seek to exploit technology wherever possible to enhance learning and to improve the efficiency of all internal systems.

DIFFERENTIATION, INCLUSION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Every child is unique. It is vital that the curriculum and teaching strategies take account of this and that staff appreciate and provide effectively for the needs of each individual.

- Planning will provide clear differentiation to meet the needs of MAGAT, SEN and EAL pupils. IEPs will be taken into account and directly referenced in planning where appropriate.
- The principles of inclusion will be applied consistently in seeking to meet the needs of all pupils. Where issues of inclusion arise, creative solutions will always be sought to enable pupils to be given the full range of opportunities open to their peers. It is acknowledged however that those opportunities may need to be presented in a different form or organised in a different way appropriate to the needs of these pupils.
- All children will have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, ability or indeed disability, in keeping with the above.

LEARNING STYLES AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

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It is recognised that, as individuals, children (and indeed adults) learn in different ways. Teaching will be planned in such a way as to address this.

- Lessons will incorporate a range of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic experiences to ensure the learning styles of all pupils are accounted for.
- Lessons will utilise a range of forms of organisation for activities. Opportunities for individual, paired, small group and whole class activities will be planned where appropriate, with style determined by the learning goals and how they may best be achieved.
- Teachers will make creative use of ICT and a range of other resources, carefully chosen to facilitate learning, increase pupil motivation and maximise success.
- Teachers will use an appropriate range of positive techniques to maintain brisk pace, pupil motivation, learning focus, and good behaviour throughout each lesson.
- Teachers will seek to build independent learning skills progressively as the children move through the school, drawing on recent research outcomes and a developing understanding of how children learn. Opportunities for pupil-initiated activities and for application of the independent skills being so acquired will be planned for and facilitated where possible within the curriculum.
- Higher order thinking skills beyond simple comprehension are right at the core of real learning. Opportunities for developing these higher order skills will also be sought, identified and planned for across the curriculum. Teachers will use a range of higher order questions as frequently as possible as one way of developing these skills and such questions will be identified in planning where possible. Teachers will also use them as a means to develop and extend children's own responses to learning, eg in class discussion.

ASSESSMENT AND TARGET-SETTING

Assessment is carried out in accordance with the school's assessment and marking policies. All staff will ensure that they are fully conversant with these policies and are applying them consistently in their classes.

Target-setting is intended to be motivational and to provide realistic challenge to pupils. Targets are set at the beginning of each academic year for individual pupil performance by the end of the academic year. These will normally focus on core subjects and generally assume a challenging two sub-levels of progress across the year. Differentiated targets will then be set within subjects on a termly basis, using assessment information from assessment weeks around the middle of each term to define the next steps the children need to take to make optimum progress. Children and parents will be informed of these targets, which will be closely linked to teachers' subsequent planning, and children will be actively involved in tracking their progress towards these goals and recording their own success when these are achieved.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING TEACHING AND LEARNING

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The Senior Leadership team will have overall responsibility for coming to a judgement about the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Lesson observations (by the SLT, Subject Leaders and external contributors such as the LA), planning and work scrutiny, and evaluation of attainment and progress across the school within each area of the curriculum will inform this judgement. From time to time the LA will be invited to moderate the school's judgements.

Developing the quality of teaching and learning across the school will be a key annual component of the School Improvement Planning Cycle. Priorities for development identified from the above process will be defined and an Action Plan drawn up to address these priorities. The Learning Committee of the Governing Body will monitor progress in delivering and evaluating the outcomes of this plan.