



# St John's C of E Primary School, Lemsford

## Teaching and Learning Policy



### 1. Policy Administration

Policy Author:	Mandy Evans
Ownership:	School Improvement Committee
Last Review:	January 2016
Next Review:	January 2019
Ratified By/Date:	Full Governing Body - 25 <sup>th</sup> January 2016

### 2. Policy Objective

This policy outlines the fundamental aims, which underpin all Teaching and Learning at St John's School

### 3. Policy Statement

At St John's VA C of E Primary we aim to provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows all children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential, irrespective of socio-economic background, ethnicity, gender or creed.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring, independent and reflective learners;
- foster children's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people;
- develop children's self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others;
- show respect for all 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 this community;
- enable children to grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.

### 4. Policy Criteria and procedure for exceptions

#### **Personalised learning**

This is at the heart of effective teaching and learning. At St John's we recognise the need to develop strategies that will allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them so that they can make good or better progress and fulfil their potential.



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From the start of their time at St John's and right through to Year 6, our positive learning culture encourages all pupils to challenge themselves and develop a '**growth mindset**'. We help all children to understand that learning is when we are finding things tricky and challenging, not when they are easy. We offer many different opportunities for learning and challenge.

Such opportunities include:

- investigation and problem solving;
- research and finding out;
- group work;
- paired work;
- independent work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions;
- use of ICT;
- a range of experiences - fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- visitors into our school
- creative activities;
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations;
- drama
- designing and making things;
- global work
- participation in athletic or physical activity
- outside classroom/environment

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

**Effective teaching and learning** is characterised by the following features of Personalised Learning:

- High quality teaching and learning
- Target setting and tracking
- Focused assessment
- Focused Intervention
- Pupil grouping when appropriate
- Pupil Choice Differentiation when appropriate
- Positive, open learning environment
- Engaging and relevant curriculum



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- Opportunities for outdoor learning and effective use of the school environment
- Supporting children's wider needs with a holistic view of each child
- Excellent Safeguarding (see policy)

### **'Quality first' teaching and learning**

This is characterised by:

- Highly focused lesson design with sharp objectives
- High expectations of pupil involvement and engagement with their learning
- High levels of interaction for all pupils
- High levels of challenge for all abilities
- Teacher questioning, modelling and explaining
- Regular and focused feedback to move learning forward
- An emphasis on learning through dialogue, with regular opportunities for pupils to talk individually and in groups
- Focused use of TA's to ensure good or better progress for individuals or groups
- An expectation that pupils will accept responsibility for their own learning and work independently
- Praise and encouragement to motivate pupils further

### **Target setting and tracking**

- Individual pupils' progress is tracked, together with that of cohorts and specific groups throughout the school. We use a range of performance measures including teacher assessment and test results. Strengths and areas for development are identified to inform planning and to implement intervention programmes as appropriate. Formative assessment information (on-going day to day) and summative assessment information (end of unit 'tests', more formal termly/yearly assessment) is collected on a regular basis. Information on children's progress and next steps in learning is shared with the staff, pupils and with parents at consultations and in end of year reports.
- Pupil progress meetings are held regularly with class teachers, SENDCo (where appropriate) and headteacher, to identify strengths/weaknesses for individuals and/or cohorts and to agree next step strategies requirements for the teachers to implement.
- Parents/carers receive regular updates on their child's progress so that they can provide support/encouragement as appropriate.
- The Head teacher, and subject leaders monitor pupil progress through regular lesson observations, learning walks, pupil interviews, book and planning scrutiny.



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### **Focused assessment**

Secure knowledge of each pupil's current progress is a core element of teaching and learning at St John's. Lesson planning is based on prior learning and throughout the learning process, active assessment is required to ensure that the expected rate of progress is being made.

Fundamental to our formative assessment procedures is Assessment for Learning (AFL).

A range of AFL strategies are used in the classroom:

- Learning objectives and individual or group targets are made explicit and shared with the pupils.
- Success criteria are agreed by the pupils and teacher.
- Self and peer assessment is used against the success criteria.
- Pupils are engaged in their learning and receive immediate feedback on their progress.
- Marking feedback supports improvement and can take different forms (see marking policy)
- Summative assessment opportunities are used throughout the year. These include optional and end of KS tests, standardised tests in spelling
- Regular continuous assessment is central to teaching and learning practice, including FS Profile Ages and Stages and Good Learning Development. St John's uses a baseline assessment in the first few weeks of entry into Reception.

### **Intervention**

It is expected that the great majority of pupils at St John's will make at least the expected rate of progress through first quality, class-based teaching. However, for some pupils this approach may not be sufficient and these pupils, at various stages, may benefit from additional small group or 1:1 intervention programmes to enable them to make the progress required to achieve their full potential.

Central to the effective planning of an intervention programme is the knowledge the teacher has of a particular pupil or groups of pupils. When considering pupils for either Wave 2 or Wave 3 interventions, a wide range of assessment evidence is drawn upon to support judgements made about pupil progress, including discussion with SENCo, TA's and parents where appropriate.

Teaching Assistants are a well-trained valuable resource in our school and they work with groups to support learning and assist in classrooms.



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### **Pupil Grouping**

All classes are mixed ability. Classes are organised as follows: Reception, Year 1&2, Year3&4, Year 5&6. In order to meet the learning objectives and learning needs and provide appropriate challenge and support for all pupils, teachers use a range of grouping options across the year group and within their classes.

- ability groups across a Key Stage
- skills based grouping (guided reading/writing)
- paired work (response partners) to facilitate discussion
- individual work
- pupil choice
- whole class groups

### **The Learning Environment**

Our teachers work hard to ensure classrooms and school buildings are attractive learning environments.

- Displays are changed regularly, to ensure 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. Highly visual and interactive displays, such as, 'learning walls', are used to engage pupils and encourage self-help strategies.
- All classrooms are extremely well resourced (each room containing an interactive whiteboard, classroom computers with internet access, a visualiser, class libraries of fiction and non-fiction books etc) facilitating a wide range of different teaching and learning activities.
- We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning, and an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources and high-quality work by the children.
- Creative use of internal space has provided areas for small group intervention work or 1:1 tuition and increasingly, external spaces are being used to provide the 'outdoor classroom'.

### **Curriculum Organisation**

We have been working towards a more creative, skills based curriculum. We run both a one year and two year rolling Long Term Topic Plan. The new National Curriculum 2014 and related programmes of study are also used to guide our teaching. These set out the aims and objectives and detail what is to be taught in each year group.

Our medium and short term lesson plans contain detailed information about the teaching activities, skills to be taught and tasks to be set, the resources needed,



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and the expected learning outcomes. We also hold 'Curriculum weeks' which focus specifically on one area or subject.

In personalising the curriculum, we aim to find appropriate challenges for pupils and address their particular needs so that they may all have an equal opportunity to succeed.

We aim to cater for the needs and interests of a full range of learners including:

- the more able/gifted and talented
- learners with learning difficulties and disabilities
- learners with English as an additional language
- girls and boys
- looked after children
- learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

### **The Extended Curriculum**

Helping pupils to discover and/or develop new interests is essential to personalised learning at St John's. During the school year a range of activities are organised to enhance the curriculum:-

- Educational trips - it is expected that classes endeavour to go on one trip every term
- Residential visits for Upper KS2
- Extra- curricular clubs for all ages, abilities and interests
- Visits
- Visitors

This approach extends beyond school hours with our After School Club ASK which runs from 3:15 to 6:00pm each evening. Breakfast Club is currently offered from 7.45 - 8.45 am.

We ensure that all tasks and activities that the children do are safe. When we plan to take children out of school, we first inform parents and obtain their permission. In so doing, we follow the LA guidance on Off-Site visits and volunteers. Staff complete detailed risk assessments using the Evolve system, which are authorised by the Educational Visit Co-ordinator (EVC) and Head teacher.

### **Supporting children's wider needs**

Schools that are able to identify barriers to learning beyond the classroom and address them are in a strong position to provide personalised learning for individual pupils. At St John's, we aim to establish good relationships with all our families and to provide a climate which is open to dialogue. Within school, we can offer advice and support through school-based services, for example:

- School nurse
- Speech and Language therapy
- Learning Support services
- Family Support Worker



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- AIO - attendance
- Other external agencies

Where additional support from other agencies is required, a 'team around the child' approach may be needed.

St John's uses the Electronic Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to identify barriers to learning and as a result, Team around the Child (TAC) meetings or TAF (Team around the family), involving a range of multi-agency professionals, are set up by the school SENDCo.

### **Celebrating effort and achievement**

Supporting and acknowledging pupils' effort as well as achievement lies at the centre of our ethos and will embrace many different areas of pupil's development.

It will include:

- Our weekly celebration assembly acknowledges pupil's birthdays, effort made in class through Beacon Pupil award, Attendance award, Headteacher's Awards, merit certificates, sporting success, House activities, achievements in activities children pursue outside school.
- school events such as concerts, plays and class assemblies are seen as opportunities for all pupils to demonstrate their own best performance
- pupils are often asked to perform outside of school in choir, music group in church, dance performance etc.
- pupils are encouraged to believe that any work exhibited (performance or display) should be their highest standards of personal attainment.

### **The role of governors**

Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on teaching and learning.

In particular they:

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by helping to allocate resources effectively
- ensure that the school buildings and premises promote successful teaching and learning
- ensure that high quality staff are appointed
- monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment through link visits to the school and in consultation with subject leaders
- ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching and learning
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning policies through the school processes of self evaluation. These include reports from subject leaders and the head teacher's report to governors



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- governors carry out regular visits into school with a specific focus.
- The School Improvement Committee meets with the the SLT at least termly to monitor standards and review progress towards objectives in the School Improvement Plan.

### **The role of the school**

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn.

We inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- publishing our 2 yearly curriculum cycle on our website
- holding curriculum evenings to explain our school strategies for teaching the National Curriculum;
- publishing class newsletters on our website at the start of each term in which we outline the curriculum that the children will be studying during that term at school
- sending out weekly newsletters informing parents of important dates, activities, celebrating successes etc.
- sending annual report to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can improve further;
- explaining to parents how they can support their children with homework. We suggest, for example, regular shared reading with very young children, and support for older children with their projects and/or investigative work
- holding parents' evenings which provide an opportunity to discuss pupil's progress - KS2 pupils are invited to attend as well

### **The role of Parents**

We believe that parents, as their child's primary educator, have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies.

Parents have a responsibility to:-

- ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible
- ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit
- ensure that their child is supported in homework activities which consolidate learning
- inform us of their child's interests and capabilities
- inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour at school
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general



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- fulfil the requirements set out in the home/school agreement.
- ensure that emergency contact details are up to date and accurate.
- providing support for the discipline within the school and for the teacher's role
- participating in discussions, with teachers concerning their child's progress and attainment.

### **The role of the child**

We believe that the child has a responsibility to:

- participate as fully as possible in the learning opportunities and help other children to do the same
- be organised bringing necessary kit, taking letters home promptly, returning reading books regularly
- work hard and try his/her best to meet all challenges
- behave appropriately in school according to the school's behaviour code
- be polite and helpful to other pupils and adults in school
- come to school regularly and be on time
- talk at home about what he/she has learnt at school
- take good care of the school environment
- complete homework regularly and bring it back to school
- wear the correct school uniform with pride
- tell the teacher or an adult at home if he/she finds the work difficult

### **Monitoring and review of Teaching and Learning**

All our teachers reflect on their strengths/areas for development and their professional development needs are planned for accordingly. We provide internal and external guidance to support our teachers in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding so that they can continually improve their practice.

We are aware of the need to review the school teaching and learning policy regularly so that we can take account of new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school.