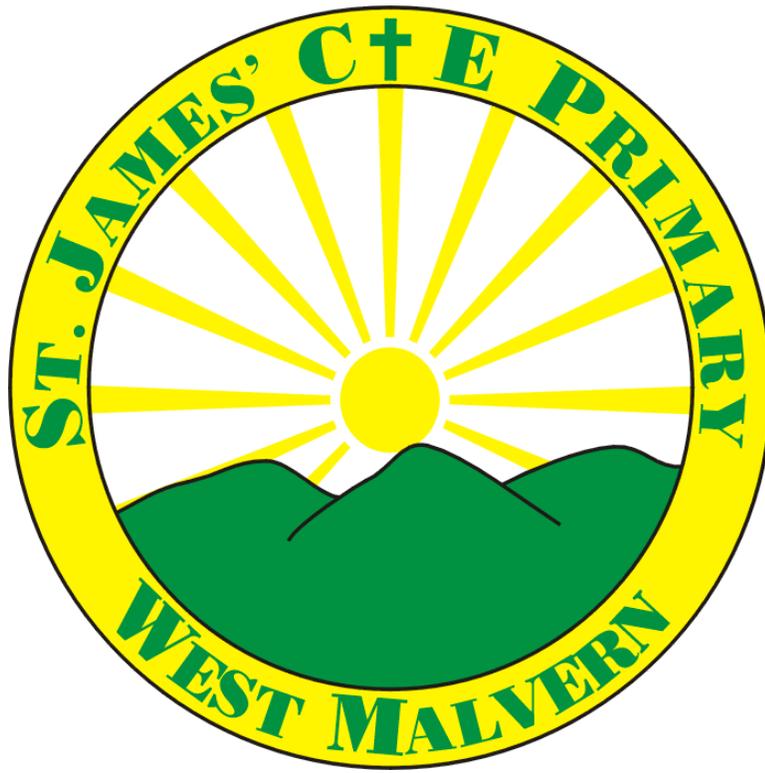


St. James' CE Primary School



Learning Together: Caring Together

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy

Policy Reviewed: October 2016

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INTRODUCTION

The following document has been compiled by the staff of St. James' CE Primary School and is a reflection of the factors considered important in teaching and those factors that affect learning and assessment.

THE CURRICULUM

The whole curriculum is regarded as a total set of learning experiences available to the learner in school, both in and out of the classroom. These experiences will be both planned and unplanned – it is important to remember that the hidden curriculum may provide powerful learning experiences. This policy document will support teachers in planning quality learning experiences in appropriate contexts for our children; these planned learning experiences need a framework which shows the curriculum to be offered. Our curriculum is in line with but not confined by the National Curriculum 2014, it is relevant to our children here at St. James' and ensures continuity and progression across the Key Stages.

By following weekly timetables, the staff at St. James' CE Primary School ensure that the curriculum offered is balanced and broad, thereby promoting pupils intellectual, physical and personal development. In the Early Years work is 'blocked' so that children have time to explore and develop their ideas. Classes have the freedom to establish a timetable that suits the working pattern of the class. Units of Enquiry are carefully planned to ensure the full range of subjects are taught and that all statutory objectives are covered. We are careful to ensure that the structure of the lessons reflect the age and ability of all children so that learning is personalised.

Equality of opportunities is always of paramount importance to staff. All children, whatever their ability, are offered a stimulating, engaging, broad and balanced curriculum which fosters a lifelong love of learning. This fully supports our policy of inclusion for all.

PLANNING

Long Term Planning (curriculum planning over the academic year)

Children are asked to give ideas about subjects and ideas that interest them. Staff work with these ideas to create and develop an overview of Units of Enquiry and teaching sequences that incorporate the skills and knowledge needed to cover the National Curriculum 2014. These units are fitted into a 2 year programme to ensure that the statutory parts of the curriculum are embedded.

Medium/Short Term Planning (termly, half-termly and weekly curriculum planning)

At the beginning of each half-term, staff use policy documents and the National Curriculum 2014 to produce a detailed ***Unit of Enquiry*** built on assessment of prior learning and the skills and knowledge required for all children to make progress. This is expertly built in to a ***Teaching Sequence***, a week by week forecast, which details the progression of each subject over the course of the unit. Children are encouraged to think of questions that they would like to ask about an area, activities that would help them find out more and a final project that will display their learning. This is then expanded to a more detailed plan specifying the learning objectives, success criterion and the planned learning activities. Any required risk assessments are also carried out at this stage.

In the termly Unit of Enquiry, staff use a detailed planning document which enables the teacher to focus on:

- Impact – the key skills and knowledge we expect the children to acquire.
- Evidence – what will be produced as a result of the learning?

- Provision – what activities will they undertake? What learning skills will they use?
- Prompts – National Curriculum 2014 requirements that will be covered.

These planning documents are completed for individual lessons or units (blocks) of lessons where more appropriate. Plans indicate clearly where differentiation has been planned, as teachers plan learning for key groups:

- Lower ability;
- Middle ability (the majority of the class);
- More able + challenge;
- SEND – activities for children requiring further support are also detailed.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

Learning Objectives

These are detailed for every lesson and are explicitly shared with all children using the Learning Objective and Success Criteria language, phrased as ‘Remember to...’

Learning labels including this information are used in most circumstances. They are primarily based on National Curriculum 2014 objectives.

Marking and feedback provided reflects the Learning Objective and Success Criteria for each lesson (see separate Marking and Feedback Policy).

It is expected that most children will be working on age-related National Curriculum 2014 objectives for each subject area and that children in Reception will be working on statutory Early Learning Goals.

More able pupils may be working at a higher level, primarily by developing depth and breadth of learning (which focuses on application and reasoning). This will also be discussed with parents during consultations and detailed on report documentation.

At times, children on the SEND Register may be focusing on objective from lower year groups to ensure that they have no gaps in understanding; this will also be discussed with parents during consultations and detailed on report documentation.

MEASURING, RECORDING AND TRACKING PROGRESS AND ATTAINMENT

At St. James’ we use both formative and summative assessment sources to ensure that our evidence banks provide a full and accurate picture of every child’s progress and attainment in all areas.

We use a robust and rigorous system to track the progress and attainment of every child at all times; this is also used as a planning tool and ensures that the needs of all learners are met through the opportunities that are provided.

Regular pupil progress meetings are held where the progress and attainment of all children is analysed so that any required intervention can be timely and effective. Targets are set for future attainment and progress of all learners.

Outlined below are some examples of the ways that assessment information is gathered in specific subject areas:

Reading

EYFS/Key Stage 1: Each child has a Home Liaison Book which is used by the class teacher, parents and children to record progress and experience of reading.

Key Stage 2: As a progression from the above, children record the books they have read and their opinion and knowledge of each book and author in their HLB's.

Evidence of a child's understanding of what they are reading is gathered in guided reading sessions, both in teacher led and independent activities, as well as in specific Literacy sessions.

Summative assessments in Reading take place on at least a termly basis to further inform judgements from Year 2 onwards.

Whole school and cluster reading moderation meetings are scheduled at least termly to ensure that judgements are accurate.

Writing

Opportunities for writing are carefully planned to ensure that children are being exposed to a wide range of genres. High quality texts are used as a key basis and stimulus for writing.

It is expected that children will produce at least one extended piece of writing per Literacy unit (usually every 2-3 weeks) and this will be a result of the draft, edit and improve process. Children will receive detailed feedback on writing produced. A portfolio of writing evidence for each child will be gathered across the year. Teachers make judgements about attainment in writing using an agreed cluster framework for each year group.

Each year group has 'non-negotiable' criteria at the front of their Literacy books to ensure that expectations are high.

In EYFS and KS1 Phonics is taught as a discrete daily session. From Year 2 onwards Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar is taught as a discrete daily session. An overview of objectives for these sessions is devised by teachers on a half-termly basis to ensure that statutory requirements are met. In addition, Phonics, Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar are taught and reinforced through all other Literacy teaching. Regular assessment of children's phonic knowledge is made and children take part in the Phonics Screening Test at the end of Year 1. Termly summative assessment of Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar begins in Year 2.

Whole school and cluster writing moderation meetings are scheduled at least termly to ensure that judgements are accurate.

Mathematics

Teachers plan mathematics learning opportunities skilfully to ensure that knowledge and skills are carefully built upon. Each lesson has a focus objective and children are assessed as to whether or not they have achieved this and at what level.

We believe it is crucial that we develop a sense of number in all of our children because this provides a foundation upon which their understanding can grow. We believe that children need to experience a range of concrete, practical and abstract opportunities. Models and images are of paramount importance in developing understanding (more details can be found in our Calculation Policy).

In order for children to truly understand the objectives that they have been taught they need to have opportunities to apply and reason with them; activities are carefully designed to ensure that this happens. From this, teachers are able to make judgements about a child's individual level of attainment.

Summative assessments in mathematics take place on at least a termly basis to further inform judgements from Year 2 onwards.

Whole school and cluster mathematics moderation meetings are scheduled at least termly to ensure that judgements are accurate.

REPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

Parent consultations are held in the Autumn Term; the detailed and comprehensive Annual Report to Parents is issued near to the end of the Spring Term, with a longer parent consultation meeting offered soon after to discuss the content and an update report document is issued near the end of the Summer Term.

Pastoral and specific issues are dealt with and discussed if necessary as they arise.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS/DISABILITY

In order for some children to fully access the curriculum, individual teaching plans may be put in place if required.

These will identify specific learning outcomes and will be regularly reviewed and discussed with the child and parents. Please see the SEND Policy for full information.

It is important to recognise that children with SEND need teaching of the highest quality and time spent with the teacher is of paramount importance. Children will only leave the classroom for regular individual tuition by a Teaching Assistant if this is deemed necessary. Children with identified SEND will be tracked closely to ensure that they are making at least as good progress as other children and are not falling further behind their peers.

GIFTED AND TALENTED/MORE ABLE

St. James identifies children in each year group who have a special aptitude for an area of the curriculum; this is possible and clear due to the robust planning, assessment and tracking procedures that are in place. Teaching sequences for each term are planned and enrichment and challenge activities are carefully planned for more able children. This may be to take the lead in a research group, to work at greater depth in a subject or to complete a more complex piece of work. Accessibility to further enrichment and challenge activities should be available to all children who are ready to take on an extra challenge. The needs of able children can be met within our mixed ability classes by providing opportunities for depth and breadth of learning, without necessarily accelerating children though age-related objectives of National Curriculum 2014. In addition, children from St. James' are at times invited to participate in challenge and enrichment days in specific subject areas at our local secondary schools; we participate wherever possible, sending children that we believe will

gain the most from such an experience. As we identify children who are more able in each curriculum area this ensures that different children are able to enjoy these enrichment activities.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES

The staff at St. James' are aware that it is necessary to teach in a variety of ways in order to meet the needs of all children e.g. visual, auditory, kinaesthetic. Plans are discussed and activities chosen which reflect higher order skills. There needs to be a balance between procedure and application – between specifically teaching a skill and allowing children the time to practise and use the skill in a variety of situations. Lessons follow a pattern of Review, Teach, Practice and Apply; both within lessons and across a series of lessons.

CLASSROOM ORGANISATION

A stimulating, well-organised, resource-based learning environment which provides opportunities for discovery across all curriculum areas is essential for successful teaching and learning.

Resources Management

A wide variety of resources are used within the classroom e.g. video, ICT, artefacts, objects from the home, language masters etc.

Materials and resources are stored tidily and systematically both within classrooms and communal areas. Where possible, within classrooms such resources are easily accessible so that independence in our learners can be developed. Resources may be labelled in different ways using pictures, words and photographs. The use of open shelves and storage containers enables children and adults to know where equipment is for self-selection and putting away.

A good supply of varied, stimulating and good quality materials encourages children to work imaginatively and collaboratively, contributing towards our aims.

Independent Learning

Encouraging children to work independently begins in our Reception class and is extended each academic year as the children move through the school. We want our children to take responsibility for their own learning as they get older and to be able to make decisions for themselves. Teachers rely upon a range of strategies to encourage children to be independent in the classroom. These may include:

- Ensuring classroom rules are clear, understood and agreed.
- Making clear to children what is expected of them.
- Ensuring pupils have appropriate tasks and activities depending on their abilities.
- Establishing routines for finished/unfinished work.
- Identifying resources to which children need access.
- Setting open ended home learning tasks.

Class Management

Children need to be given the opportunity to work in different ways in order to develop important key learning skills. Accordingly, teachers build into their weekly plans opportunities for children to work with learning partners, groups, on their own and as a whole class where appropriate.

THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

At St. James' we believe that the outdoor classroom provides vital learning opportunities that can develop important skills. A member of our staff team is responsible for this element of our curriculum and we the following points are of fundamental importance:

- The outdoor classroom needs planning and organising as much as indoors and all areas of the curriculum should have an outdoor element.
- The outside environment is included in long, medium and short term planning.
- Focused outdoor activities should be planned on a weekly basis for all learners.
- Value and status needs to be given to outdoor learning.
- Staff enjoy involving themselves in all aspects of outdoor play and learning, including acting as role models.
- Staff have an understanding of the learning taking place and use this knowledge to extend children further.

Throughout the curriculum we seek to embed both knowledge and skills through rich and exciting themes. In all areas we aim to develop:

The 6 R's

Responsibility
Risk taking
Resourcefulness
Resilience
Reflection
Respect

TEACHING STRATEGIES

The staff of St. James' CE Primary School consider that successful teaching takes place when:

- Lessons have clear aims and purposes, based on what the child or class needs to **learn**.
- Lessons ensure the fullest participation of all learners.
- Teaching methods suit the topic or subject as well as the children.
- Teachers have high expectations of all learners.
- Attainable challenges are given to all learners.
- Teachers provide regular feedback and children are provided with opportunities to respond to this.
- Relationships are positive between all members of the school family.
- National Curriculum objectives and the progress of all children towards these are taken fully into account.
- Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of their subject area of activity.
- Teachers use time and resources effectively.
- Teachers assess children's' work thoroughly and constructively and use those assessments to inform future work.
- Teachers are enthusiastic.
- Lessons have a good pace.
- Teachers show sensitivity to individual needs.
- Teachers retain a sense of humour!

Some of the key strategies that may be used to meet these factors are:

- Direction;
- Demonstration and modelling;
- Scaffolding;
- Facilitating;
- Explanation;
- Questioning;
- Investigating;
- Observing;

- Discussing, justifying and clarifying;
- Listen to and responding.

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES – FURTHER INFORMATION

modelling	The teacher as expert demonstrates both the process and the internal dialogue that a learner might go through.
direct instruction	Explaining and demonstrating how something works or how to carry out a process; giving instructions to prompt or inform the next steps in children’s learning.
dialogue and discussion	Using planned opportunities for focused talk, teachers develop an understanding of children’s thought processes and ideas.
problem solving	Planned opportunities for children to apply their learning, pose further questions and develop and test hypotheses.
apprenticeship	Planned opportunities to learn alongside another more expert learner (adult or child).
practising and rehearsing	Repeating learned facts or skills to develop automatic recall or to internalise the process.
questioning	Using questions to identify prior learning, scaffold understanding and extend thinking for learning in order to create new meaning.
self-directed learning	Planned opportunities for children to decide what and/or how they learn.
use of symbols, images and models	Planned opportunities for visualisation and representation to secure and aid understanding.
inductive learning/enquiry	Planned opportunities for pupils to sort, classify and re-sort data to begin to make hypotheses that can be tested in future work.
tutoring	Addresses errors at the point of misconception. Supports the child in articulating their thoughts as they learn. Can occur in formal and separate tutoring sessions or as individual support to children in the course of independent work.
scaffolding	A Vygotskian term referring to all pedagogical techniques that consciously use the learner’s existing knowledge, skills or understanding as a starting point, recognise what is within the Zone of Proximal Development for that learner (what they will be able to achieve with help), and move them towards that point.

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE EARLY YEARS

The Early Years Classroom is designed to be flexible, dynamic and interesting with designated areas capable of accommodating a wide variety of educational activities while retaining a commitment to order and routine.

Children are carefully introduced to the organisation and routine of the unit and come to know the structure of the day.

Children become familiar with learning in a small group and whole class situation as well as being drawn aside by staff on a one to one basis for specific tasks.

Within this structure are plenty of opportunities for children to be independent in their choice of activity and friends.

Teaching and learning is balanced between focus activities and managed tasks in order that the children acquire the wide range of knowledge and understanding and skills that are fundamental to their success and happiness in later life.

Managed tasks are supported by a member of staff (often the teacher) who ensures that the children are working appropriately and who acts as a facilitator to move the children's learning on. These more unstructured tasks are always linked into the learning outcomes and objectives set for the topic and will form a means for the children to have more ownership of their learning. They are not low-level time filling tasks, but offer a real opportunity for the children to learn in different ways and will address differing learning styles.

Structured situations range from whole class, small focus group to one to one teaching.

THE ROLE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS AT ST. JAMES'

The role of the teaching assistant is flexible, from supporting teachers and teaching, to supporting children's learning.

At St. James' we have teaching assistants who are class-based and teaching assistants who have designated roles e.g. outdoor learning, interventions.

The work of both teachers and teaching assistants best supports the learning needs of the children when:

- Time is set aside for communication and to share learning intentions, implementing of needs and outcomes for the curriculum.
- Time is set aside for sharing knowledge of individual children and groups.
- Teaching assistants are involved in staff meetings and teacher development days as part of their professional development.
- Teaching Assistants have a clear knowledge and understanding of the schools aims.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Equality of opportunity is a whole school issue which is reflected through the ethos of the school as well as through the curriculum. Teachers will ensure suitable groupings for tasks and will ensure that all children gain access to appropriate educational experiences.

The school will encourage maximum achievement for all pupils through the regular review of teaching and learning styles and classroom interaction.

PARTNERSHIPS

The school has close links with a variety of different groups and this enhances provision for the children of St James'.

Early Years Partnership

The school forms part of a group of pre-schools and other primary schools. The group meets termly to discuss continuity of teaching within and between establishments, ensuring that transition is smooth and provision is of a high quality.

Local Authority

The Local Authority provides continuous support for the school, coordinating and providing a variety of professional development for staff members.

PATH Group

This group of 6 other partner schools from around Malvern encourage each other in staff development and in exploring and modelling good practice. The areas where we primarily support each other are: SEND, Early Years, Mathematics, Literacy and Assessment.

Community

St. James' plays an important part in the local community. Children regularly attend the Parish Church and Reverend Nichol is a weekly visitor to school. The expertise of local people forms part of the school curriculum and they are invited into school when appropriate.

Parents/Carers

Parents are always made welcome in school. All staff value their assistance both within the classroom and on educational visits. Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning at home, for example with reading, spelling and learning times tables.

Governors

Governors visit school regularly, join us for services and special occasions and meet with staff. They monitor aspects of school life through visits to St. James' and discussions with subject leaders, staff and children.

Diocese

The school takes part in joint events with other schools in the Diocese of Worcester. The Diocese also provides training opportunities and support for staff.

VISITS

The curriculum is supported, enhanced and extended through visits where appropriate. Most classes have at least 2 visits per year, which are either full or half days in duration. We have a separate Educational Visits Policy.