

Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School

Learning and Teaching Policy

Mission Statement

"You are precious in my eyes" - Isaiah 43

- ◆ Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School is committed to the widest and fullest education of all pupils in a partnership between home, school, parish and community.
- ◆ Our school aims to create a happy, ordered environment where all members feel secure, valued and respect each other.
- ◆ Our school aims to be a positive force within the Catholic church inspired by the life of Christ in the Gospels

At Our Lady Star of the Sea we continuously strive to live our school mission statement through all actions, thoughts and words. We place Christ firmly at the foundation of the entire learning process. Underpinning this is the recognition that each person is unique and should be valued and respected.

By encouraging, inspiring and challenging each person to fulfil their true capacity we strive to ensure that learning is engaging, challenging and enjoyable.

Learning is at the heart of everything we do – it involves and is participated in by everyone in our whole community. We believe that the key to successful learning is effective teaching, which inspires a 'can do attitude', using mistakes as a growth tool and challenge through questioning and exploration to develop deeper understanding. Effective teaching is the key to developing independent learners, who learn from their mistakes, enthuse during learning and aspire to know and understand more. At Our Lady Star of the Sea we are committed to life long learning, actively encouraging everyone to take responsibility for developing their own understanding as they grow into effective learners.

Whole School Aims related to this policy

- To set and expect high standards in everything we do.
- To provide a structured, stimulating environment, which builds on strengths and supports need, thus promoting independence and self-esteem.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which challenges all children to achieve their true capacity.
- To equip children with the knowledge, understanding and skills to progress confidently into secondary education and adult life.

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Policy Aims

- To develop children as independent learners who know how they best learn.
- To develop children's understanding of how the brain works as a growing muscle and how their choices can impact on its growth.
- To develop a growing understanding of the eight characteristics of learning through our eight school characters.
- To enable effective learning.
- To promote both reflective learning and teaching.
- To encourage a consistent approach to teaching.
- To enable children to make maximum possible progress intellectually, physically, socially, spiritually and morally.
- To enable all children to have equal access to all learning opportunities.

Learning Environment

We recognise that the environment plays an integral role in promoting independent, effective learning. We aim to provide a learning environment which:

- Promotes an atmosphere of mutual respect where children feel safe to take risks.
- Promotes independence and various ways of working.
- Is well ordered and organised.
- Has a variety of displays covering the breadth of the curriculum.
- Has displays which are interactive, celebrate children's work and set standards of presentation.
- Is rich in language.
- Is rich in number.
- Is used daily as a teaching resource.
- Conveys high levels of expectation.
- Is consistent between classes.
- Is secure and safe.

Learning

We believe that learners are most effective when they are involved in, and take responsibility for, their own learning.

Learning at Our Lady's therefore is a shared experience between all learners, which encourages all to grow in independence and face new challenges with enthusiasm.

We aim to promote children's ability to:

- Reflect and consider all possibilities.
- Ask and answer questions.
- Actively listen.

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- Contribute to discussions in a relevant and thoughtful way.
- Explain their understanding.
- Appreciate and evaluate their own work and that of others.
- Be active self-correctors, who can reflect on and learn from their mistakes.
- Co-operate and work collaboratively with peers and adults, valuing shared learning.
- Problem-solve and be resilient.
- Take calculated risks.
- Select appropriate resources for tasks.
- Organise their learning opportunities independently.
- Respond to tasks with learnt and new knowledge to take learning forward.
- Take pride in the presentation of their work.
- Respond positively to established routines and practices.
- Make important decisions about their own learning.

We recognise that adults in school are also learners and that all of the mentioned aspects of learning also apply to them. At Our Lady's we strive to provide opportunities for adults to develop their skills as learners so that they are an effective community of professional learners. All adults are expected to seek learning opportunities and central to this is reading, trialing new ideas and reflecting on impact.

Teaching

At Our Lady's we recognise that the organisation and effectiveness of teaching has a direct impact on the quality of a child's learning experience.

Therefore, we strive to develop and refine our teaching by continuously reflecting upon the delivery of our lessons.

We accept the responsibility for continued professional development and learning.

Within our daily work we strive to:

- Have high and realistic expectations of ourselves and our pupils.
- Be well planned, well prepared and organized.
- Be a role model - punctual, dress and speak appropriately, show respect for others.
- Be supportive of and assist colleagues by respecting individual differences and by working collaboratively as part of a whole school team.
- Have appropriate levels of subject knowledge.
- Take a reflective approach to our work.
- Seek to improve our skills and understanding through planned professional development.
- Develop classroom systems and organisation, which support independent learning.
- Enjoy our teaching and maintain our enthusiasm and sense of humour.

Children will only become truly independent, in charge of their own learning experiences, when all of these aims are fully realized.

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We aim our teaching to demonstrate:

- The bigger picture for children to put their learning in context.
- Deep learning which is exciting and challenging.
- Clear and shared learning objectives.
- Creative planning and stimulating resources.
- Varied organisation of pupils: individual, pairs and groups
- Differentiated and matched activities reflecting an understanding of pupil's ability and development levels.
- A range of teaching styles and methods to meet all needs.
- Good pace and effective use of time.
- Lesson organisation, which involves children in their own learning.
- Developmental questioning, which challenges children to think and reflect.
- Challenge and support, encouraging risk taking and learning from mistakes.
- Assessment, which helps children to recognise both strengths and weaknesses and what the next step on their learning journey is.

Resources

We recognise that to be effective, learning and teaching must be supported by adequate levels of appropriately, stored resources.

At Our Lady's some resources are communal and some are classroom based. Some are subject specific and are stored in allocated areas - subject leaders review these resources annually.

On an annual basis all resources are audited to ensure that resources are:

- Of good quality showing appreciation for best value.
- Ample for the levels of use.
- Appropriate for each task.
- Frequently reviewed for continued relevance and suitability.
- Labelled in appropriate storage.
- Varied to allow for differentiation and preference.
- Able to meet the needs of pupils and staff.
- Organised and stored to promote independence.
- Looked after.

We recognise that all resources are to be used to support learning opportunities for all children and therefore will be shared. Resources are not owned by one class but shared by all.

Planning

Effective planning enables learning opportunities to be organised effectively. At Our Lady's planning is through:

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- Curriculum mapping, overviews and Medium term plans.
- Mini Key Stage discussions and meetings to address curriculum needs and specification.
Developing plans appropriate to developmental stage of children.
- Weekly lesson plans/timetables.
- Senior Leadership Team meetings.
- Staff curriculum based meetings.
- Subject leader led meetings.
- Informal discussions between colleagues.
- Discussions between teaching and support staff.
- Individual Education Plans.

All planning considers the individual child and what the next learning step should be therefore prior knowledge and assessment are crucial to ensure continuity and progression.

Assessment

At Our Lady's we recognise that assessment is a powerful tool, which helps to ensure that learning fits individual needs. Therefore, we actively involve children in the whole process to encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning and help them to begin to make decisions about the next steps to take.

Effective assessment is achieved through:

- Daily interactions, observations and discussions.
- Effective questioning which challenge and support
- Daily marking and feedback of Literacy and Numeracy learning.
- Children's reflections and evaluation of own and peer work.
- Quality marking used by staff and children to continue on a learning journey.
- Formal and informal testing.
- Teacher assessments.
- Statutory testing.

Marking

We recognise that this is a crucial part of the assessment process and if done effectively can enable children to become independent and confident to take the next learning step. To ensure that marking is effective and empowers the learner we aim to:

- Establish opportunities for prompt and regular written or spoken dialogue with children as part of our daily routine, providing immediate feedback.
- Ensure that both teachers and children are clear about the learning objectives of a task and the criteria for success.

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- Ensure that children are encouraged to comment on and evaluate their work before handing it in or discussing it with the teacher.
- Provide children with time to act on the feedback they are given.
- Ensure that teachers provide constructive suggestions about the ways in which the child might improve his/her work.
- Ensure that teachers agree next steps with the child and follow up the agreed targets to see how much progress has been made.
- Ensure that teachers recognise effort as well as quality, not in a vague or generalised way, but linking effort to specific skills or understanding.
- Ensure that teachers use the information gained through marking together with other information to adjust future teaching plans.

Organisation for Learning

We recognise that learning is most effective when the person directing the learning ensures that systems, procedures and expectations result in effective ways to:

- Meet the needs of all children.
- Progressively develop skills.
- Meet the learning objectives.
- Optimise the use of support staff.
- Allow teachers to teach.

Learning is at its most effective when the person facilitating the learning enables a variety of learning opportunities and styles to be experienced and engages the learners. This provides the child with the optimal opportunity to learn.

To achieve this at Our Lady's teachers use a mixture of:

Whole class teaching to promote:

- Shared lesson objectives and learning.
- Explanation and discussion.
- Direct teaching and skilled questioning.
- Stating expectations and encouraging enthusiasm.
- Focusing attention and concentration.

Group and paired work to promote:

- Collaborative working practices.
- Differentiated teaching.
- Shared and developing ideas.
- Assessment opportunities.

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- Speaking and listening opportunities.

Individual Work to promote:

- Independent learning.
- Thinking and reasoning skills.
- Problem-solving.
- Practice of skills.
- Individual responses.
- Prolonged reading.
- Close observational work.
- Working at own pace which challenges each individual to achieve what they are capable of.

Monitoring and Evaluation

At Our Lady's we recognise that it is the responsibility of all teaching staff to monitor and evaluate this policy by developing reflective practices, acting as a critical friend to colleagues, and by listening to comments from pupils, non-teaching staff and parents.

Through our professional responsibility to develop a reflective, supportive and creative relationship we work together, striving to maintain the highest of standards.

We recognise that Learning and teaching are the responsibility of everyone and can only be effective if all the community works together.

More formal evaluation of this policy will be through lesson observation, pupil work scrutiny and data analysis with relation to standards.

This policy was reviewed in summer 2019 and was accepted by staff and governors. It will be reviewed again in summer 2021

Related documentation:

- Staff Development.
- Performance Management.
- Subject Leader Information.
- Behaviour Policy.
- Curriculum Management and Development.
- Able, Gifted and Talented Policy.
- Special Educational Needs Policy.
- Assessment Policy.