

Teaching and Learning Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At St Mary's VA Primary School we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and children learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

2 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 We believe that children learn best in different ways. At St Mary's we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.
- 2.2 Through our teaching we aim to:
- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent 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;
 - help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.

3 Effective learning

- 3.1 We acknowledge that children learn in many different ways and we recognize the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them.

These include:

- investigation and problem solving;
- research and finding out;
- group work;
- pair work;
- independent work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions;
- use of the computer;
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- creative activities;
- watching television and responding to musical or tape-recorded material;
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations.

3.2 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.

4 Effective teaching

4.1 When teaching we focus on motivating the children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.

4.2 We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's level of attainment. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of the children. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability. When planning work for children with special educational needs we give due regard to information and targets contained in the children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs). We have high expectations of all children, and we believe that their work here at St Mary's School is of the highest possible standard.

4.3 We set academic targets for the children in each academic year and we share these targets with children and their parents. We review the progress of each child at the end of the academic year and set revised targets.

4.4 We plan our lessons with clear learning intentions. We take these intentions from the Foundation Phase Framework and the National Curriculum for Wales programmes of study. Our lesson plans contain learning intentions, success criteria key skills references and assessment for learning opportunities. We evaluate all lessons so that we can modify and improve our teaching in the future.

4.5 Every teacher treats the children with kindness and respect. We treat them fairly and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. All our teachers follow the school policy with regard to discipline and classroom management. We set and agree with children the class rules establishing a whole school code of conduct. We expect all children to comply with these rules that we jointly devise to promote the best learning opportunities for all. We praise children for their efforts and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. We insist on good order and behaviour at all times. When children misbehave we follow the guidelines for sanctions as outlined in our school behaviour policy.

4.6 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.

4.7 We deploy learning assistants and other adult helpers as effectively as possible. Sometimes they work with individual children and sometimes they work with small groups.

4.8 Our classrooms are attractive learning environments, and we ensure that the classroom reflects the topics studied by the children. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display their work . 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.

- 4.9** All our teachers have the opportunity to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses through a professional dialogue, (lesson observations / book scrutiny) with the Headteacher and plan their professional development needs accordingly.

5 The Role of governors

- 5.1** Our governors at St Mary's, support, monitor and review the school policy on teaching and learning. In particular they:
- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
 - ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning;
 - monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations;
 - monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment;
 - ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching;
 - monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning policy through the school self-review processes.
 - These include Governor visits to observe lessons, reports from subject leaders and Headteacher's report to governors, as well as a review of the in-service training sessions attended by our staff.

6 The role of parents

- 6.1** 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:
- holding parents' evenings to explain our school strategies for teaching and learning;
 - sending information to parents at the start of each term in which we outline the topics that the children will be studying during that term at school;
 - sending regular reports 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.
- 6.2** We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We would like parents 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;
 - do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
 - 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;
 - fulfil the requirements set out in the home/school agreement.

7 Monitoring and review

- 7.1** 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, and have a well established review cycle embedded in the school improvement plan