

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy



Introduction

'You yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. Teach the truth so that your teaching can't be criticised.' Titus 2:7-8

'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.' Colossians 3:16

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School we have designed our curriculum with pupils' learning at the centre with the aim of ensuring that all pupils make progress. We recognise that a curriculum has to be broad, balanced and offer pupils opportunities to grow as individuals as well as learners. As a Catholic School, the teachings of the gospels is at the centre of everything we do. Pupils are taught to treat each other with respect and to support each other in their learning. We aim to ensure that pupils enjoy learning and feel prepared for life after school. We intend to offer our pupils new and exciting experiences that are designed to build resilience, confidence and self-esteem both in the classroom and through extra-curricular activities. We recognise that pupils should be challenged in their school; learning from failures and celebrating successes. We intend for our curriculum to enable pupils to develop their interpersonal skills, creativity and independence. It is our intention that pupils leave Holy Cross Catholic Primary School with a sense of belonging to a community where they have the confidence and skills to make decisions, self-evaluate, make connections and become lifelong learners. It is our intention to provide a Catholic education in which our children are informed and empowered to transform society.



Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is at the heart of our school's Planning, Policies, Practice and Ethos. As a Rights Respecting School we not only teach about children's rights but also model rights and respect in all relationships. This policy is underpinned by:

Article 3: Everyone who works with children should always do what is best for each child

Article 29: The right to become the best that you can be.

Article 31: Every child has the right to play and rest.

Objectives

This teaching and learning policy is intended to promote consistency and high standards and the achievement of the school mission statement. At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School we aim to provide a caring, supportive and stimulating environment with high quality teaching through which to foster:

- ❖ Bible Teachings
- ❖ Gospel Virtues
- ❖ British Values
- ❖ Rights of the Child
- ❖ Characteristics of Effective Learning
- ❖ Citizenship

Aims of our Curriculum

For all pupils to:

- ❖ Become fluent and confident readers and to develop an appreciation and love of **reading** whilst gaining knowledge across the curriculum.
- ❖ Use embedded **basic skills** across the curriculum including Reading, Writing and Mathematics.
- ❖ Be **enthused by the curriculum** and have a positive attitude to learning.
- ❖ Retain key **knowledge** in all curriculum areas and be provided with opportunities to apply skills taught.
- ❖ Become **independent, resilient and divergent** learners so they are ready for secondary school (and beyond).
- ❖ Be **challenged** and make **progress** across all areas of the curriculum (including disadvantaged pupils and those with a special need and/or disability).
- ❖ Have a broad and lasting knowledge of subject specific **vocabulary**.
- ❖ Learn how to be a better global citizen and understand the impact they can have on society.
- ❖ Have a wide range of **life experiences** that enhance their learning (including trips and extra-curricular activities).

Teaching and Learning Rationale

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, our teaching and learning strategies are underpinned by current research outcomes and key educational influencers. Lev Vygotsky was a Russian Psychologist whose work was translated and published in the 1960's. Vygotsky sees language as a key mediator of learning, noticing that from early childhood, we make sense of our world through social interactions. He posits that **children learn to understand the world through interactions via more experienced individuals**. The staff at Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, recognise that it is themselves who act as the experienced individuals who can equip and impart knowledge and understanding in order for our children to succeed in life. We also plan opportunities for children to develop their spoken language e.g

- ❖ Use of talk partners
- ❖ Modelling how to talk using standard spoken English
- ❖ Praise children who display characteristics of effective learning e.g reasoning reindeer, team-work tiger.
- ❖ Self and peer assessment
- ❖ Role play, drama and oral activities
- ❖ Embedding week opportunities

"The language instinct is the simplest form of the social expression of the child... and the greatest of all educational resources."

John Dewey, American Educational Thinker

Vygotsky also coined the term 'The Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD) which is the level a learner is capable of reaching via the guidance of teachers or in collaboration with peers. The staff at Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, further recognise their role as scaffolders to children's learning in the classroom. It is their role to push the children, with guidance and support, out of their comfort zone. This is when learning and progress is truly achieved. This can be seen in the classroom as:

- ❖ The lesson planned to meet the children's next step in learning
- ❖ Building on prior knowledge and skills
- ❖ Range of questioning used to challenge children further
- ❖ Collaborative learning opportunities
- ❖ Mixed ability seating (if applicable, the curriculum will be personalised to meet the needs of the learner)
- ❖ Praise children who display characteristics of effective learning e.g risk-taking ram, link and learn hero, super chooser, collaborative cheetah, have a go hero.
- ❖ 'Growth mindset' culture based on the work of Carol Dweck, to encourage our children to always have a go, to use a different strategy if they get stuck, to seek peer support and to learn from their 'marvellous mistakes'

Vygotsky's educational viewpoint forms the basis of our teaching and learning rationale. As a leadership team, we will also continuously observe and learn from updated research that reflects our school ethos and vision.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's level of attainment. Our prime focus is to develop further their knowledge and skills. 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 (SEN) we use the SEN toolkit to support learning and progression and ensure high quality teaching is taking place. We have high expectations of all children, and believe that all children should be included in the full range of educational opportunities and that their work here at Holy Cross Catholic Primary School should be of the highest possible standard.

All teachers work hard to establish positive working relationships with the children that they are teaching. We treat them fairly and give them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. All teachers follow the school policy with regard to discipline and classroom management. We praise and reward children for good effort and, by so doing, 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 Pastoral, Care and Discipline Policy.

Teaching Assistants and other adult helpers are deployed in a variety of ways. Sometimes they work with individual children and sometimes they work with small groups. Teaching Assistants are also fully involved in the delivery of support programmes such as, booster sessions, emotional groups, Wellcomm interventions, Race to English, Overlearning and EAL sessions.

All teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs accordingly. We do all we can to support teachers in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice.

Learning environment

Creating a stimulating, safe and welcoming learning environment is crucial for children to be able to progress and achieve their full potential. Learning environment guidance is provided for staff to follow to ensure consistency and high standards throughout the school.

Target Setting

The targets are set in relation to the Characteristics of Effective Learning (CEOL). They are linked to 'how' children learn and motivate children to become resilient and independent learners. The Gospel Virtues are intertwined with the Characteristics of Effective learning targets to ensure our faith is always shining through everything we do. The targets are set for each Key Stage with progression planned in across the year groups and each classroom has an interactive display dedicated to COEL. The display shows the target for the specific class with photos of children on them to show which target they are currently working on. A chart is kept to record when and how a child has met one of the COEL targets.

Planning

We use:

- The National Curriculum
- Skills Progression Maps
- RE Scheme of work (Archdiocese of Birmingham)
- EYFS Planning
- White Rose Hub
- Grammarsaurus
- Classroom Secrets
- Hamilton
- Twinkl
- Year 6/7 transition arrangements

Most Long Term planning follows a two year rolling programme allowing for phase expectations to be met. The school's Curriculum Overview Map for each class shows how themes are distributed across the years in a sequence which promotes curriculum continuity and progress in children's learning.

Short term planning is the responsibility of individual teachers who build on the medium term plan by taking into account the needs of the children in their particular class. We endeavour to make links across the curriculum, which is referenced on Foundation Stage Planning by each teacher.

Foundation Planning allows individual teachers to break down weekly foundation subject lessons by identifying the following:

- Learning objectives to be addressed in a particular lesson.
- The activities/differentiation
- The success criteria
- Cross curricular links

Staff save their planning weekly into the Shared Planning Folder on the computer or they print planning off from their chosen resource and annotate it to meet the needs of the class. Planning is monitored by the Senior Leadership team regularly.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment exists to equip the staff with the correct information in order for all children to succeed. It ensures more effective teaching by providing the evidence for closer matching of tasks to the child's needs. It assists the children by providing them with an indication of what stage they have reached in the learning process. It helps to identify future planning and teaching strategies. It also helps us to recognise and move on from success.

Assessment for learning is:

- Is part of effective planning
- Affects learner motivation

- Focuses on how students learn
- Promotes commitment to learning objectives and success criteria
- Is central to classroom practice
- Helps learners know how to improve
- Encourages self assessment
- Has an emotional impact by promoting self esteem
- Recognises progress from a child's previous best

We use these strategies to link assessment to better teaching and learning:

- Evaluation of daily and weekly planning to inform next lessons
- Assessment tasks e.g. writing, mathematics, reading: results from question level analysis is used to inform future planning
- Use of data from formal assessment relating to Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to inform planning and groupings
- We use PIRA assessments and White Rose Hub assessments to inform our summative assessments.
- Use of the SEN Toolkit to ensure children are making progress and to better support and enhance learning for children with special educational needs.
- Use of Educator to track all children in line with end of year expectations, using knowledge of their previous attainment (all the way from EYFS) and set aspirational targets.

Role of the Academy Committee:

The members of the Academy Committee determine, support, monitor and review the school's teaching and learning policies. In particular they:

- Support the use of appropriate teaching
- Monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment
- Ensure that the school buildings and premises are effective in supporting successful teaching and learning
- Ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching;
- Monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations
- Monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning policies through the school self-review processes. These include the Principal's reports to governors and the work of the curriculum committee.

Role of Parents

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping their children to learn. We work hard to inform and support parents in how they can help further their children's learning and confidence at school. Parents' briefing meetings with teachers are held at the start of the year to outline specific year group information and expectations. Inspire Workshops are held during the academic year to offer parents an opportunity to work alongside their child. Parents' evenings are held to discuss pupil progress and strategies for further improvement.

The school makes available information to parents at the start of the academic year about the topics each class will be following in English, Mathematics, and in the Foundation subjects on the school website. Information about homework expectations is available on the website so that parents know what will be given to children each week.

As children begin at Holy Cross Catholic Primary they follow our induction process which gradually introduces the child to their new teacher and class and to the sort of experiences they will be having

in Reception class. Parents are provided with important information from the class teacher. Parents can share any concerns they may have. They also receive information about helping their child with early English and Mathematics skills.

Parents receive a mid-term report in the Spring term and are given the opportunity to discuss their child's current progress and ways to support their child better at home. Parents then receive a detailed school report in July. This outlines the child's achievements during the year, how they are achieving relative to expected levels and how they can improve and develop in the future. Parents may discuss any concerns they have with teachers at any point in the year; this is encouraged.

We also hold workshops throughout the academic year which parents are invited to attend. During these workshops we show and model the ways in which we teach certain areas of learning to ensure consistency and allow parents to support their children better e.g. mathematical mindset, calculation policy, grammar knowledge.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that children attend school regularly. Holidays during term time should be avoided as these interrupt the child's progress and they miss important work and may fall behind. Parents are asked to inform the school of any absence on the first day (telephone answer phone available) so that we know that they are safe at home.

Many parents offer some of their time to help in school. These offers are always welcome and parents undertake a variety of tasks, working with individuals and groups of all ages. All school helpers are required to undertake a DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) as appropriate before starting work.

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