



St James' CE (Aided) Primary School

Teaching for Learning and Curriculum Policy 2021

Aims

This policy is intended to provide an overview of teaching for learning and the curriculum at St James' CE Primary School. Whilst individual teachers have their own styles, and teaching should be adapted to the needs of the class, it is important that St James' pupils have access to the same quality of teaching throughout the whole school and that learning is consistent across classes and year groups.

We aim to develop pupils who are well rounded individuals, ready to contribute to society and who have a lifelong love of learning. We believe that resilience, creativity and independence are key skills every learner should develop.

Our curriculum is an entitlement for all children, regardless of social background, culture, race, gender, differences in ability and disabilities, to develop and apply the knowledge, skills and understanding that will help them become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

The Christian ethos of the school promotes a culture in which individuals are respected and valued and is reflected in all curriculum areas as well as in our approach to working together as adults and children within the school community.

The symbol of St James is the pilgrim's shell. As each child journeys through school, we seek to support them by laying firm foundations, growing and learning together from the teaching of Jesus about wise and foolish builders.

I have come in order that you might have life - life in all its fullness.

John 10 v 10

Teaching for Learning

Pedagogy

At St James' we believe that high quality first teaching is vital to children's success. Whilst we acknowledge that different lessons lend themselves to different styles of teaching and learning we recognise several foundations which make up good pedagogy. We therefore agree that every lesson should include:

- **Short, effective teacher inputs**, including high level questions
- **Lessons that start with a RAP**, to reflect on or recap previous learning, **or an engaging activity** for the children
- **Talk is worthwhile**, structured and purposeful and develops learning behaviours e.g. interaction and collaboration
- **High expectations** and appropriate **challenge** for all through differentiation so that learners are actively engaged
- **Learning behaviours (metacognition) developed purposefully** e.g. praising effort and learning skills rather than outcome, providing choice to develop independent learning, teaching pupils how to reflect on their own learning
- **Safe and supportive learning environment** which encourages pupils to take risks and promotes a **Growth Mindset**
- **Children know what/why they are learning**; the learning is **contextualised** and **relevant**; it meets the needs of 'our' children from each of their starting points with **visible progression** which builds on prior learning.
- **Effective feedback** given to move learning on. To follow the marking policy this should be little or no written feedback but next steps for learning given through RAP, verbal feedback (given by teacher and/or peers) or differentiation in next lesson

We know that learning can take place at three different levels: shallow, deep and profound.

Shallow learning is teacher led and can include activities such as Phonics, times tables, facts and spellings. **Deep** learning encourages children to use the skills they have acquired in shallow learning and to become more responsible and independent in their learning. Examples of deep learning are applying mathematical facts to solve simple problems, reading comprehension, writing stories and colour mixing to create artwork. **Profound** learning is when what children have learnt becomes personal to them and allows them to engage with ideas and thinking. For example; creating ideas, creating music or drama to perform, sharing knowledge with others, problem solving and investigating.

The activities listed in shallow learning are valuable and necessary but if children remain stuck at this shallow level they are unable to make links in their learning or to use what they already know to build their learning and they could become passive and unquestioning. Therefore, we strive to provide opportunities for deep and profound learning for all our children.

We do this by providing opportunities for pupils to reason, explain, justify, answer higher order questions, collaborate, and solve problems on a regular basis.

Curriculum Intent

Our Curriculum for our learners

St James' is a large primary school in the centre of Tunbridge Wells, a Spa town in the South East of England with a commuter link to London. At St James' we have a small catchment area, however this holds a changing demographic and we benefit from a diverse mix of cultures and ethnicities. We aim to deliver a curriculum which is suited to the needs of all our learners here at St James'. Tunbridge Wells hosts many secondary schools with different characteristics including, but not limited to, grammar and faith schools, and our pupils often disperse between a number of these as they leave primary education. It is therefore our role to prepare our children for a variety of different education systems when they leave Key Stage 2.

At St James' there is a high level of parental engagement and parents/carers take a great interest in their children's learning. Many of our children have opportunities to experience the world beyond Tunbridge Wells whether through real-life or digital connections. It is therefore important that we build on our pupils' individual experiences, teaching them to navigate the world safely and confidently whilst also recognizing that not all our pupils will have the same starting points.

Learning at St James' includes an emphasis on learning behaviours such as independence and resilience as we work to prepare our children to become successful, lifelong learners.

We aim to develop pupils who are world citizens by celebrating diversity and developing an understanding of the world and their place within it.

Covid-19 Catch-Up

At St James' we are working hard to diminish the impact of Covid-19 lockdowns. So far this year we have run catch-up groups for phonics, writing and maths across the school, targeted at those pupils who have fallen behind in their learning as a result of the Covid-19 lockdowns. When planning, teachers identify learning gaps for example by using White Rose small steps or our school progression of skills documents and plan lessons to address any missed learning before moving on to year group expectations.

Phase Topics

We have an inclusive approach to topic planning where all staff meet at the end of every big term, to plan and prepare for the following one. We pride ourselves on our creative approach to planning, plotting the journey through a phase topic and sharing ways in which we can provide memorable learning experiences. Each topic that children experience is different, to allow for as much coverage as possible over an academic year, and to ensure that from Reception to Year 6, children will never repeat the same learning. Although each year group needs to deliver the same skills and knowledge each year, linking it to a topic gives it a new lease of life.

As a recently amalgamated school, we aim to promote an inclusive environment where children and adults can support and learn from each other across all key stages. Phase topics allow us to make links between year groups, for example by pupils working together with children from a different year group on shared activities. Planning phase topics together also allows subject leaders to have a greater awareness of their subject across all key stages as well as providing opportunities for subject leaders share their expertise and to offer support and guidance.

In addition, having a topic-based approach enables us to deliver cross curricular lessons, as there is a common thread throughout all learning. By teaching cross curricular lessons, children are constantly revisiting and embedding their existing knowledge by building on it and applying it in other areas.

Research has shown that when learning can be related to real life, it gives it meaning and purpose, and therefore it is remembered. As a result, we fill our curriculum with real experiences, including visitors, theme days, workshops, trips and use of the local area. We also plan a stunning start, marvellous middle and fantastic finish within our topics. These are designed to hook children into the topic, to reignite interest part way through and to celebrate learning.

Progression of Skills and Knowledge

To ensure there is progression whilst exploring the same topic, each Subject Leader has set out a specific set of skills which should be taught within each year group. These skill progressions are used when planning each topic to break down the learning for each subject, within each year group, into smaller stepping stones. They give teachers a step-by-step guide for the order in which the content of a subject should be taught. This ensures that children develop specific skills needed, in a logical order, to achieve the overall goal. It also ensures that, as units are revisited each year, the specific skills focused upon are a clear development of the prior learning.

As a school we are currently developing knowledge planners that make explicit the key, 'sticky' knowledge that should be included in each topic. Like the current skills progression, this knowledge will build as children move through the school and provide a clear framework for planning each topic so that opportunities to revisit and revise core knowledge are exploited fully.

Characteristics of EYFS

We follow the guidance of the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* to ensure we meet the standards required to support children to learn and develop well and to keep healthy and safe. The overarching principles of the Framework, which shape the practice of Early Years settings, are:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. the framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Teaching in Reception at St James' Primary School is delivered in accordance with the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. This specifies the areas of learning to be covered across the EYFS. Birth to 5 Matters 2021 is also used as guidance for assessing across the EYFS.

Our learning environment is carefully planned in line with these requirements to ensure thorough coverage of the seven areas of learning and development. There are three prime areas which are essential for children's development and learning. These are:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
- **Communication and Language**
- **Physical Development**

These prime areas enable children to develop specific skills in a further four areas:

- **Literacy**

- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding the World**
- **Expressive Arts and Design**

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is considered essential for children's development and we ensure a balance between learning through child-led play and activities guided by adults. Towards the end of the year, the balance will shift towards more adult directed activities to prepare children for the transition to Year 1.

In all activities and learning opportunities, consideration is given to the development of the characteristics of effective learning. These are the skills children need to acquire in order to become resilient learners. Three characteristics of effective learning as highlighted within the Early Years Statutory Framework are:

- **playing and exploring** – children investigate and experiences things, and 'have a go';
- **active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.
- **creating and thinking critically** – children develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Characteristics of KS1

Key Stage 1 comprises of Year 1 and Year 2. In this phase we focus the children's learning and experiences on local issues and familiar interests. Much of the learning at this stage is focused on enabling children to identify who they are and understanding themselves. The children are supported to develop the skills and characteristics necessary to access learning opportunities (for example confidence, trying new things...). We endeavour to ensure children enjoy their time at school whilst developing the fundamental skills and knowledge to support life-long learning.

In order to provide a smooth transition from Reception to Year 1, the first half term in Year 1 reflects many of the approaches used in Foundation Stage teaching, including opportunities for child-initiated learning, independent challenges and adult led focus groups. After half term children transition into whole class teaching for English and Maths; these lessons are for 45 minutes every day. In addition, children will also have specific Phonics teaching and a daily Literacy Carousel to address reading and handwriting. Foundation subjects are delivered through a combination of whole class, focus groups and independent challenges.

Year 2 includes a similar approach to Year 1 in many subjects, however English and Maths lessons increase to 1 hour per day.

Our home learning consists of daily reading and handwriting practice. In KS1, children are expected to read at home every day. They will also bring a handwriting sheet home once a week, to practise what they have done in school.

Characteristics of Lower Key Stage 2

Lower Key Stage 2 comprises of Years 3 and 4. In this phase we aim to bridge the gap between the Lower and Upper Phases. We do this by making the learning less child centric and more outward looking, extending learning beyond the immediate area and time periods and developing more understanding of the wider world.

As children continue to move through the school into Key Stage 2, learning moves towards more whole class teaching, while giving pupils plenty of opportunities to work collaboratively, independently and with support as appropriate for the needs of the child, the learning focus and content of the lesson. Some subjects are taught through whole school topics and others as discrete subjects and daily English and Maths lessons continue much as in Key Stage 1.

Characteristics of Upper Key Stage 2

In Upper Key Stage 2, we begin to prepare pupils for the next stage in their education. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 are encouraged to take more ownership of their learning; for example by engaging in independent research or making decisions about how to present their understanding of a concept. Lessons will give pupils the skills needed to understand a wide range of perspectives as well as the confidence to allow them to form, and express, their own opinions.

Our homework allocation is designed to increase as pupils move through the school whilst still remaining manageable and reasonable for the age of the child. We recognise that parents/carers must manage homework time according to their child's needs or other things going on at any given time. Of much more importance than quantity is the quality of homework.

In Key Stage 2, homework provides more of an opportunity for children to develop the skills of independent learning, which should increasingly become its main purpose. It is important that teachers share the level of parent assistance that is expected on tasks through newsletters, meetings or the children. By the time children reach Year 6, homework should cover a range of tasks and curriculum content. Please see our separate Homework Policy for information about how this is broken down across different Year Groups.

Learning Powers and Growth Mindset

We aim to prepare children for real life, and promoting a growth mindset throughout the school, is integral for supporting them to be confident and resilient to challenge. We aspire to equip our children with the skills and the mindset to grow as learners beyond St James' and throughout their lives.

Celebration assemblies are linked to the Learning Powers and Growth Mindset qualities with certificates being awarded for application of these learning skills and attitude to learning.

EYFS and KS1

It is our belief that all learners need to develop the ability to reflect on how they learn for that learning to be successful. For this reason we have established eight 'Learning Powers' within the school. Each element is represented by a different character:

- Curly Wurly the Caterpillar says 'Concentrate'
- Donald the Duck says 'Be Determined'
- Callum the Camel says 'Be Curious'
- Topsy and Tim the Tortoises say 'Be a Team (Co-operate)'
- Ellie the Elephant says 'Enjoy Learning'
- Henry the Hedgehog says 'Have a Go'
- Iggy the Iguana says 'Use your Imagination'
- Charlie the Insect says 'Keep improving'

These characters are introduced from Reception and are embedded throughout Key Stage 1. They are displayed within classrooms and regularly used to support the review of learning.

KS2

In Key Stage 2 pupils build upon these foundations about how to learn by the introduction of the Growth Mindset approach. This is centred on the work of Dr Carol Dweck, a Psychology Professor who states that:

“Recent advances in neuroscience have shown us that the brain is far more malleable than we ever knew. Research on brain plasticity has shown how connectivity between neurons can change with experience. With practice, neural networks grow new connections, strengthen existing ones, and build insulation that speeds transmission of impulses. These neuroscientific discoveries have shown us that we can increase our neural growth by the actions we take, such as using good strategies, asking questions, practicing, and following good nutrition and sleep habits.”

Pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught the difference between a Fixed Mindset (where intelligence is seen as something which cannot be increased) and a Growth Mindset (where the strategies above are used to increase capacity). They are given a framework of language to discuss learning and to help foster a Growth Mindset approach to their work. For example, when a pupil encounters a challenging task rather than think “I can’t do this”, they may say “I can’t do this ... yet” which sets the expectation that with time and effort anything is achievable. As part of this approach pupils are taught to see mistakes as something to learn from rather than be ashamed of and therefore encouraged to take risks in their learning. Pupils are also given opportunities to reflect on their learning; asking questions of themselves such as, “What have I learnt and how did I learn it?”, “What have I struggled with and how can I improve this?”

Key Stage 2 have recently introduced a set of specific learning behaviours which build on the EYFS and KS1 learning powers. These are: Zest, Optimism, Self-control, Curiosity, Social intelligence and Resilience.

Forest School

Forest School Learning outside of the classroom is an embedded practice of the school. Woodpecker Forest School is run in the school’s woodland areas by teachers and TAs who have Forest School practitioner training at Level 3.

All children have the opportunity to attend six sessions of Forest School during each year they are at the school. In addition, leaders run 2 additional sessions per week for children who the school have identified would benefit. The school has an outdoor classroom for outdoor learning to take place where children can use outdoor resources for Maths, Science, Geography, Music, RE and English.

- Outdoor learning enables children to consolidate and apply their learning outside of the classroom. In addition to this, it can help to develop the skills of enquiry, critical thinking and reflection, necessary for our children and young people to meet the social, economic and environmental challenges of life in the 21st century.
- Forest school gives children the freedom, time and space to grow in confidence. It is a great opportunity to support the development of the whole child, giving children an opportunity to succeed in different areas and build on the growth mindset values that are woven throughout the school, such as resilience and cooperation, and supporting good mental health.

Curriculum Implementation

Planning

Long Term Planning

When planning phase topics, staff meet in phase teams to create a Long Term Plan. This details the stunning start, marvellous middle and fabulous finish as well as mapping out the learning journey in chunks across the term.

Medium Term Planning

Each year group then breaks this learning into weekly sessions for each subject, plotting the Learning Objective or Key Question for each session. Teachers use the subject progression documents to ensure coverage and progression for their year group at this stage in the planning.

Short Term Planning

A weekly plan is created as a year group and used to keep notes about specific activities for the week. This can include resources, links to websites and outcomes expected. This weekly plan is not intended as a teaching script and there is no expectation that teachers create individual lesson plans.

EYFS

Within the EYFS, the topic is used as a foundation for planning with opportunities for children to also engage in their own self-initiated activities. Key skills are identified through the progression documents and these are planned for within the coverage of the topic. These skills are embedded within the provision of the learning environment and children can apply them within their activities.

We encourage flexibility within our planning to allow for children's own interests to be reflected within their learning environment. Weekly plans are generated across the year group to ensure consistency in the provision, however skills may be developed differently across the classes based on the interests of the children and the choices made through child-initiated learning. Staff follow the observation, assessment, planning cycle to ensure learning opportunities are accessible and challenging for all.

Curriculum Teams

Across all Key Stages, members of staff with different curriculum responsibilities are encouraged to work together. Subject leaders may work together to introduce a new initiative, lead staff development training or support each other in delivering their actions plans. At times, subject leaders will meet in the teams which incorporate a range of subjects in order to support each other and ensure meaningful links are made across the curriculum.

Our subjects are organised into the following curriculum teams:

Humanities	Wellbeing	Creative	Logical	Language
History	PSHE	Art	Maths	English
Geography	PE	DT	Science	EAL
RE	Forest School	Music	Computing	MFL

Monitoring

In order to maintain high standards of teaching, learning and the curriculum, Phase Leaders, Middle Leaders and Senior Leaders engage in regular monitoring exercises across the school. They use book looks, pupil voice, learning environment checks and drop in observations to inform their

understanding of current provision and to identify next steps for continued improvement. Feedback is given to staff about strengths and areas for development.

Assessment

EYFS

Within the EYFS, learning is continuously assessed to inform future planning. Staff observe children's interactions and activities and these are recorded in individual Learning Journals where progress is made. Birth to 5 Matters 2021 is used to inform Reception Baseline Assessments and termly tracking and staff assess progress across all 17 areas of learning. Tracking is completed upon entry to provide a baseline for each child, and then at three further points throughout the year. Transfer documents from Pre-Schools and information from Parents also contribute to these assessments.

KS1&2

At present we are moving towards termly assessment for Foundation Subjects in Key Stages 1 and 2. In non-core subjects, key statements for each subject are used to determine whether pupils are working at the Expected Standard. A small proportion of pupils will be working Above or Below the Expected Standard.

RAP, 'Reflect and perfect', is a strategy used at the start of lessons to revisit prior learning and is a core part of the school's assessment policy. This is based on the research around cognition and the need to consolidate learning in order to transfer it from short term to long term memory.

Roles and responsibilities

Learning and teaching is a shared responsibility and all members of the school community have an important part to play. All members of the school community should work towards the school's aims by:

- cherishing children as individuals and respecting their rights, values and beliefs;
- fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community;
- providing a well ordered environment in which all are fully aware of behavioural expectations;
- offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life and recognising the importance of different cultures;
- encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviours and the process of learning;
- working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another.

Teachers will endeavour to:

- provide a challenging and stimulating curriculum designed to encourage all children to reach the highest standard of achievement;
- recognise and be aware of the needs of each individual child;
- be good role models, reflecting the British values and our Christian ethos;
- keep up-to-date with educational issues and have a positive attitude to change and develop their own expertise;
- provide clear information on school procedures and pupil progress;
- give positive and constructive feedback that moves pupils learning along;
- take responsibility for the teaching and learning in their class and deliver quality first teaching;

Subject leaders have a variety of roles. These include:

- taking the lead in producing a progression of skills document, to ensure progression and continuity in their subject throughout the school;

- being organised and prepared when planning whole school topics, leading other staff when considering their subject;
- supporting colleagues in their development and implementation of the scheme of work, and in assessment and record-keeping activities;
- monitoring their subjects and advising the Headteacher on action needed as well as feeding back successes and development points to staff;
- taking responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for their subjects;
- keeping up-to-date through reading and CPD.

Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning by:

- ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, well-rested and in good health;
- ensuring that their child arrives at school wearing the correct uniform and bringing necessary equipment;
- providing support for the discipline within the school and for the teacher's role;
- supporting the work of educational targets and becoming actively involved in the implementation of any support programme;
- participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainment;
- supporting their child with home learning;
- ensuring early contact with school to discuss matters which affect a child's happiness, progress and behaviour;
- ensuring that all contact addresses and telephone numbers are up to date and correct;
- encouraging their child to become increasingly independent as they progress throughout the school;
- informing the school of reasons for their child's absence;

Pupils are encouraged to support the school's aims by:

- coming to school regularly and on time;
- being organised by bringing their book bag, reading books and contact book;
- behaving well in school, on the playground and on the way to and from school;
- taking increased responsibility for their own learning by using their learning powers;
- taking increased responsibility to be independent where possible.

Governors are encouraged to support the school by:

- recognising and celebrating success;
- developing positive and worthwhile relationships with the staff;
- getting to know the children;
- recognising different teaching styles;
- understanding the environment in which teachers teach;
- monitoring policies;
- finding out what resources are needed and prioritising these;
- supporting and challenging Senior Leaders and Subject Leaders;
- appointing, and being responsible for the appraisal of the Head Teacher