ST MICHAEL'S NURSERY AND INFANT SCHOOL

LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

RATIONALE

As a school we aim to:-

♦ Ensure a common high quality of experience for all pupils to help maximise each individual's potential, whilst supporting creativity and individuality within teaching and learning.
♦ Provide an insight into review and development of current and future teaching and learning practice, which enables staff and pupils to remain stimulated and focussed.

NOTE

Any work on Teaching & Learning must take account of assessment, behaviour, learning support and equal opportunities. There are policies in place for those aspects of T & L and their contents will not be duplicated in this policy. Please refer to those policies for all relevant information.

Quality Teaching:

♦ Provides carefully structured activity matched sensitively to pupils needs
♦ Gives pupils some responsibility for their work and independence
♦ Develops well planned, prepared and paced lessons that maintain high levels of interaction with the class
♦ Provides ample, challenging work stemming from expert knowledge of curriculum, how to teach it and how pupils learn
♦ Maintains high levels of pupils involvement in tasks
♦ Creates a positive atmosphere in the classroom through excellent relationships
♦ Incorporates high levels of praise and encouragement
♦ Uses a variety of approaches; strategies and techniques are well selected and time is used productively
♦ Uses homework effectively; particularly to reinforce and extend what is learned in school

Quality Learning is:

♦ When pupils are captivated and enthused by what they are learning
♦ An active process – a product of doing rather than receiving
♦ Linked to prior knowledge supported by both the teacher and other pupils and takes the form of interaction, collaboration and teacher intervention.
♦ Collaborative through co-operation, dialogue and creating knowledge with others
♦ Centred on the learners' responsibility for their own learning. They are able to exercise choice, develop goals, plan their approach and work independently
♦ Reflective and enables learners to monitor and review their learning
♦ Where learners make considerably better progress than may be expected
♦ When pupils display a strong desire to contribute the effort and concentration required to match the teachers passion for learning

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OUR MAIN AIM:

To maximise every learner's potential

In order to make this aim a reality, teachers at St. Michael's should as a team of staff always:
- set high expectations of learners at school that clearly define the effort and behaviours that pupils should put into learning in lessons
- communicate optimism by using positive language and designing challenging tasks
- demonstrate commitment to every learner's success, making him or her feel included, secure and valued
- create an environment where learners feel able to make mistakes and comfortable to learn from them, without feeling inadequate or foolish
- create opportunities for learners to develop personal qualities such as considerate behaviour and positive and tolerant attitudes that will enable them to contribute effectively to the community
- set high expectations of learners at home – engaging parents in their child's learning in partnership with the school. Parental involvement and support in the home is critically important.
- Provide a clear moral code as a basis of behaviour which is promoted consistently through all aspects of the school that will enable them to be role models within the wider community
- Create a 'high challenge-low stress' environment for learning in which pupils are relaxed, believe that they can learn (high self-esteem) and want to learn (motivated)
- Create opportunities for pupils to enjoy themselves or have fun; this is when pupils learn best, because their emotional state is fundamental to learning.

ELEMENTS IN PRACTICE

All lessons should contain the following elements listed below in some shape or form. They are the strategies formulated with staff as being most important to empower us to consistently deliver high quality lessons. In doing so, we believe these elements are core to enable us to unlock a pupils full potential and hence maximise their progress and level of attainment.

1. Learning Objectives are identified and shared

This needs to be a two step approach in which pupils are told not only the purpose of the lesson but also what the teacher expects in terms of outcomes form activity. There is a need to communicate why they are doing what they are doing and how it fits into the bigger picture of the subject or their wider learning across the curriculum.

This might be achieved through:
- the learning objectives being outlined to the pupils at or near to the beginning of each lesson
- the pupils being clear about the leaning objectives in terms of what they are expected to learn. Objectives should be phrased in terms of :-

"We are learning to….."
   a) know that … (for knowledge – factual information such as names of people or equipment, places, symbols, formulae etc)
   b) understand how/why …(for understanding – concepts, reasons, effects, principles, processes etc)
   c) develop / be able to …(for skills – using knowledge, applying techniques, analysing information etc)
   d) develop / be aware of … (for attitudes and values – empathy, caring, sensitivity towards social issues, feelings, moral issues etc)
   e) explore and refine strategies for …(creating, designing, hypothesising, exploring alternatives)

A combination of at least three of these ought to be included in lessons in order to drive a variety of activity. This will give pupils some consistency across all learning areas.

♦ pupils understanding of desired learning outcomes. We want to tell pupils what we expect from them as a high quality outcome of each lesson or part lesson and how they will be assessed on the work they are to do, create or produce. This will usually be done through effective modelling of tasks and describing or showing different possible attainment levels pupils will produce. Outcomes ought to be phrased in terms of the following:

"What am I looking for…"

a) From everyone is…
b) You to be successful is…
c) For top marks is…

2. Review learning to link and consolidate

Review helps create links with previous learning. An effective lesson should be organised into a sequence of distinct learning episodes with a beginning (teacher or pupil input) a middle (activity for pupils) and then a quick check for understanding before moving to the next episode – until the end of the lesson and review time (plenary). Pupils remember more from the beginning of a learning activity than they do from the middle. They also learn more from the end of the experience than they do from the middle. It follows that it is beneficial to create lots of beginnings and endings in a lesson. This might be achieved through:

♦ Previous learning being recapped by the teacher
♦ Pupils being involved in the recap of previous learning
♦ Recap of learning being done throughout the lesson in relation to learning objectives. Establishing what learners know, understand, can do, are aware of or have explored, correcting existing misconceptions where necessary.
♦ Review of learning done toward the end of the lesson to consolidate learning and its retention (plenary)
♦ Providing time for reviewing and reflecting upon the learning that has taken place, as well as how and why they learned.

3. Variety of Learning Activity

The main activity episodes of lessons are critical in making learning an enjoyable and challenging experience. It should stimulate learning through matching teaching techniques and strategies to the range of learning styles and needs within your class, and indeed groups within that class, to engage actively all pupils. Initially this should mean that you ensure that you use teaching techniques and strategies that will regularly facilitate the use of all the different learning styles so as to maximise pupils' strengths and develop relative weaknesses. Ultimately it should involve using pupil data and assessments to help design different tasks to meet individual pupil learning preferences. It should provide opportunities for pupils to show and develop their skills and abilities to work independently and collaboratively.

This might be achieved through:

♦ Being confident, flexible, open-minded, willing to experiment and embrace change in terms of your own teaching style and adapt appropriately.
♦ Planning and delivering a range of activities that match the maturity of the learners and the material to be learned, reflect different learning preferences and involve high levels of time on task for 'making sense' of information. This may often be achieved by offering pupils choices and by negotiating learning strategies with pupils.
♦ Using creativity and imagination and the resources offered by new technology, to engage,

enthuse, challenge and support learners and reward their effort and achievement.

- Engaging in a dialogue with pupils that centres on effective learning; what it looks like and how it can be developed.
- Tasks set in a time context
- The pupils being aware of the timing in the lesson and of the longer-term deadlines
- Activities set in a sequential order that promotes progression and complexity of learning
- Assessment having informed the decisions behind which activities are selected and how the puils are grouped for them
- Pupils being involved in planning, developing and evaluating their own activity and learning experiences
- Activities which are varied in order to access all learning styles and intelligences
- The sequence of tasks that pupils are engaged in, allowing for appropriate variation in the pace of learning and the level of challenge

When you decide how many tasks or sessions to cover in a lesson, and how long each should be, as a guide try not to exceed the concentration span of the pupils. It has been suggested that the average concentration span corresponds roughly to chronological age plus one or two minutes. With challenging classes take this figure as a maximum.

With more able classes this may actually cap potential though where more open-ended tasks set over longer periods of time will allow them to excel. It is essential therefore to remember that variety doesn't just happen; it needs to be planned according to what best meets the needs of the individuals within your class.

4. Differentiation to enable all learners to succeed

Differentiation can be seen as an on-going process that is accommodating the needs of individual pupils in our school. It ensures that teaching allows most learners to make at least their expected progress in relation to their capability. It will also stretch the less able to work as close to their capability as possible and the gifted and talented way beyond. Differentiation is best achieved when based upon an informed review of the pupil's learning, therefore through a diagnostic and formative assessment procedure.

Differentiation within classes should therefore take account of pupils' baseline, benchmark and minimum target grade data that each pupil has been set in the context of reaching their full potential. Other professional judgments through diagnostic and formative assessment may reshape your initial strategies over time, but this data should remain central to the differentiation you employ for your classes. Modifications, adjustments and alterations can be made in the following areas:-

- Learning tasks and activities
- Teaching and learning methodologies

These modifications are made at the short term planning stage where the decisions about differentiation are informed by assessment.

This might be achieved:

a) By TASK

Because pupils work in a variety of ways with their different strength and aptitudes, a range of tasks spanning the spectrum of abilities can be an effective way of differentiating.

b) By RESOURCE:

Activities which involve resources available to extend the more able as well as support the low achiever. It means changing the resources by which pupils learn to meet their individual needs.

c) by RESPONSE:

The response of the teacher / adult / pupil is a form by which differentiation can be achieved. This is essential in cases where differentiation by outcome is planned as the teacher's written or spoken response will vary from pupil to pupil. Marking of a pupil's work is an important medium for differentiation by response.

d) by OUTCOME:

Pupils working on a common un-differentiated task will inevitably produce different outcomes to the task set, as long as the task is not too closed. These differentiated outcomes should be used primarily to assess and then inform our planning for differentiation in another way (task, resource, group, support)

e) by GROUP

Differentiation by group is an important way to allow purposeful use of resources (including the other pupils in the group). Pupils could belong to semi-permanent groups within the larger teaching groups. The pupils will have a record of the groups to which they belong. The pupils need not necessarily be told how they are grouped other than there ought to be a mixed gender dimension to the groupings where appropriate.

f) by SUPPORT

The different needs of the different pupils will inevitably mean that some pupils need greater support than others. There are a number of strategies that can provide that support. Using the skills of Teaching Assistants in the classroom to create a positive environment for learning would most certainly be one if they are available.

These strategies adapt teaching to the potential of each individual from the gifted and talented to those with special educational needs, and as a result create a culture of respect for others and their learning, whatever their gender, social background or ethnic group. We expect to see a number of these different forms of differentiation over a period of time.

5. Assessment used formatively to involve pupils in their learning

The key focus of assessment in teaching and learning must be to enable the pupils to be continually aware of where they are now in their learning, where they can or need to get to, and most importantly how best to get there.

This might be achieved through:

- Having a policy on marking, assessment and reporting which ensures that feedback is provided to teachers and pupils about progress in order to support future learning and informs necessary adjustments to teaching.
- Sharing learning objectives with pupils
- Sharing assessment criteria with pupils early on in tasks, in a way which is easy for them to understand and is transparent for all
- Recognising the standards to aim for by showing pupils exemplars of work previously produced by other pupils
- Providing the basis for varied and effective feedback and development points for pupils to help them realise their potential by making them active partners in their own learning
- Developing pupils' questioning skills
- Developing pupils' self and peer assessment
- Promoting confidence among learners and being aware of pupils' preferred learning styles
- Providing experiences and activities that enable pupils to be involved in assessing and monitoring their own achievements
- Ensuring that assessment yields information that is useful in helping to improve teaching; helping teachers get to know pupils and to plan work with appropriate pace and challenge
- Ensuring that assessment yields information that is useful in helping to improve learning; helping

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pupils and parents to understand how they learn best, and how well they have learned. Assessment is of prime importance to staff to inform their future planning and activity with classes. We must recognise equally that it has a profound influence on pupil motivation and self-esteem. Therefore it must show consideration and be both constructive and sensitive. Also our ability to share this information with parents effectively is the key to pupils being supported as well as possible at home. All core assessments are recorded in the pupil's individual profiles that follow the child through our school.

PROMOTING AND EVALUATING THE POLICY

This will be achieved and supported by:

- A firm commitment to improving teaching and learning for individuals, the school and the wider community.
- The development and improvement of learning and teaching as the central component in the school development planning cycle.
- Continuing Professional Development (courses, coaching, Inset, mentoring, training and so on) within the cycle and framework of performance management
- The formal and informal monitoring systems which are already in place, augmented by lesson observation, peer observations, teacher planning scrutiny, work sampling, canvassing of staff and pupil views to inform the assessment of the following

outcomes of effective learning:

a) More connected knowledge – of things, people, action
b) Greater complexity of understanding
c) Wider range of skills and strategies
d) Increased engagement and motivation
e) A more reflective and self-directing approach to learning
f) More positive emotions about and a greater affiliation to learning
g) A sense of membership and participation in a learning community
h) A greater facility for interacting and learning with others
i) The promotion of oneself as a 'lifelong' learner

And most importantly … the fun, sense of achievement and sheer enjoyment that learning brings.

Policy Review
This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body March 2018.

Signature ………………………………….. Head Teacher   Date …………………

Signature ………………………………….Chair of Governors   Date …………………