



LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

Successful learners Confident individuals Responsible citizens Effective contributors

At St Martin's Primary School, we believe that learning and teaching are interactive. We are determined to teach children how to 'learn to learn' in order to become independent learners and develop skills for life-long learning. We believe children learn better when they are excited and engaged through excellent teaching which challenges them and shows them what they can do; learning that develops and stretches them, and excites their imagination. Our school provides a richness of learning, by learning different things but also learning in different ways, and we ensure that all of the learning is of high quality which is planned and managed so that every child is supported and challenged. We believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/ carers to ensure that learning outside of our school thrives.

Principles of learning and teaching

- Ensure every child succeeds: *provide an inclusive education within a culture of high expectations. Ability is not a fixed.*
- Build on what learners already know: *structure and pace teaching so that children know what is to be learnt, how and why.*
- Make learning vivid and real: *develop understanding through enquiry, creativity, e-learning and group problem solving.*
- Make learning an enjoyable and challenging experience: *stimulate learning through matching teaching techniques and strategies to a range of learning styles.*
- Promote assessment for learning: *make children partners in their learning*
- Enrich the learning experience: *build learning skills across the curriculum.*

Different learning styles

We acknowledge that children learn in different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that encourage all children to learn in ways that best suit them. We need to consider the age of the child and take teacher/ child and child/ child relationships into account. Effective learning takes place when a child feels a sense of belonging to an environment in which they feel safe and which gives them a sense of purpose and identity.

Children are motivated to learn if we

- emphasise real progress and achievement rather than failure
- praise effort rather than ability
- emphasise progress against previous personal best
- use comments rather than marks or grades.

Children are able to learn when we

- make it clear what they are being asked to learn and how they can recognise their own success
- help them to become aware of how, as well as what they are learning
- help them to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses
- guide them on what to do to improve and give them the opportunity to do it.

We provide opportunities to learn through

- independent, pair, group and whole class work
- the use of ICT
- enquiry, research and finding out
- 'joyning the learning' and blocking subjects
- investigation and problem solving
- visual, auditory and kinaesthetic means
- questioning
- visits and residential trips
- drama and role play
- creative activities
- participation in physical activity

We maximise learning opportunities by incorporating techniques such as jigsawing, carouselling, freeflow, mind mapping, hot seating, snowballing and envoying.

We ensure effective learning through

- thorough preparation
- a strong emphasis on the use of ICT to enhance the curriculum and extend learning
- pacy, challenging lessons
- carefully structured activities matched sensitively to children's needs
- high levels of interaction
- clear expectations of behaviour
- high standards of work
- a stimulating environment
- a positive atmosphere where children are prepared to take risks with their learning
- opportunities to reflect and review learning
- continued professional development

Learning and Teaching Across the Curriculum

We have organised the timetable to maximise learning potential. Assembly takes place at the end of the day to enable a gathering to close the day and reflect. Consequently, time in the morning is structured to maximise active learning.

Our Learning Community

We believe in lifelong learning for all members of the school community and continued professional development for all members of staff. Teacher learning communities, learning walks and staff meetings form an important part of sharing and developing teacher knowledge and skills.

Teaching and Learning Structure

We plan lessons which explore and promote learning. The bigger picture is explained, learning intentions are shared, success criteria is negotiated, questions are planned which further learning, strategies are used which maximise thinking and articulation, and ideas are modelled using real examples.

Sharing learning goals

We want our children to be self motivated, have a sense of purpose in school and be able to take responsibility for their own learning. So, what they are learning, why they are learning it and how they know if they have succeeded or not is shared with the learners.

Our planning identifies learning objectives from the National Curriculum and Numeracy /Literacy strategies. We transform these into child- friendly learning intentions in order to fully involve children in their learning.

Planning success criteria ensures child focus, clarifies understanding, identifies success, determines difficulties, provides strategies for improvement and reflects on overall progress. It acts as an aide memoir and is a summary of what has been discussed.

Strategies for sharing learning intentions

- Tell the children why they are learning this and how it fits into the bigger picture
- Write learning intentions in child-friendly language
- Plan focussed learning intentions which are not too broad
- Display the learning intention for the current lesson
- Refer to the learning intention throughout the lesson
- Separate the learning intention from the context
- Build the learning intention into an appropriate part of the lesson

Strategies for generating success criteria

- Model the thinking processes involved in achieving the learning intention
- Use examples of work to identify what a good piece of work looks like
- Edit, combine and delete criteria together so learners can assimilate
- Match the success criteria closely to the learning intention
- Focus on the process of learning rather than the product
- Think about the most useful type of success criteria e.g. a thinkabout list, ingredients, a chronological step-by-step list etc. This is usually dependent on whether the skills are open or closed.
- Let the children try the task first and then ask them to tell you what they did first, next and so on.

Promoting Assessment by pupils

We aim to maximise opportunities where children are giving each other ongoing support and feedback while they are learning, focussing on the process of learning. Children are supported and trained to work together skilfully and responsibly which in turn develops self-motivation and positive mindsets.

Peer assessment enables children to clarify their own ideas and understanding of the learning intention and success criteria while marking other's work. Self assessment enables the child to set clear targets relating to specific goals.

Strategies for developing self and peer assessment

- Devise short, focused talk-based tasks for new pairs
- Establish clear ground rules generated with the children
- Model good partnerships
- Consider how to pair and when to change learning, talking and response partners
- Provide prompts to focus feedback
- Keep referring to child-friendly learning intentions and well matched success criteria
- Model good assessment with the whole class
- Use a wide range of examples of end products to develop children's understanding of quality
- Use traffic lights, thumbs, fists, smiley faces etc
- Plan debriefing sessions after periods of learning
- Introduce learning logs or journals

Effective Questioning

We aim to engage in quality interaction which challenges and helps children to think, which in turn leads to better learning. When thinking is shared with the teacher and peers, a real understanding of what the child knows and does not know becomes apparent. Asking effective questions clarifies understanding, elicits discussions and information, provides feedback on teaching and learning and moves learning forward.

Strategies for asking better questions

- Refer to the six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy
- Refer to De Bono's thinking hats
- Plan some higher order/ fat questions
- Give a range of possible answers
- Use true or false statements
- Model thought processes
- Start with the answer
- Turn some closed questions into open questions
- Ask children to identify fat and thin questions
- Focus on how to work the answer out, not just the answer.

Strategies for asking questions better

- Take the question round the room and back again
- Use wait or thinking time
- Introduce no hands-up
- Use minimal encouragers
- Use entrance and exit tickets
- Use a bag of names or tick sheet
- Use think, pair, share
- Listen!
- Use show me whiteboards
- Plan brain breaks and timeouts
- Devise signals for children to give you feedback on their understanding e.g. traffic lights, thumbs.

Effective Feedback

We aim to support, structure, mediate and scaffold children's learning by helping them to address the gap between what they already know, understand or can do at a given moment and what they will want or need to know, understand or be able to do in the future. We encourage children to bridge that gap themselves by giving effective verbal feedback and by making written comments count. Children should continually self-evaluate so that reflection, pride in success, modification and improvement becomes a natural part of their learning process.

Strategies for enabling effective feedback during lessons

- Use reminder, scaffolding and example prompts verbally to help close the gap between the child's current performance and the desired goal.
- Use 2 stars and a wish verbally
- Use traffic lights, thumbs, smiley faces as a way of getting children to rate their achievement or understanding against the success criteria at different points of the lesson.
- Use talking partners; Pairs think, articulate and extend their learning
- Use response partners; Individuals identify what they like about their partner's work and then work together on improving one of the success criteria.

- Use real examples of completed work to generate success criteria or analyse against success criteria.
- Compare and contrast finished pieces of work to engage children in thinking about which piece represents the most effective achievement.
- Use questions to focus feedback- How, why, what?
- Allow children time to follow up and act upon feedback.
- Be positive when acknowledging children's responses.

Strategies for enabling effective feedback away from the child

- Write good comments where it really matters. Use insightful, diagnostic comments when the learning intention requires higher order thinking. Say specifically what has been done well, identify what has been less successful and suggest how improvement can be made.
- Use highlight and prompt marking e.g. two stars and a wish, highlighters, notes in the margin, post-it notes etc. Train children to understand this process by using scanned examples and marking it with them.
- Use written prompts to help close the gap.

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