



St. Joseph's P.S. (Slate St)
Teaching and Learning
Policy

Rationale

We believe that:

- Learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone i.e. learning should enable children to make expected or accelerated progress.
- Teaching needs to equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary in order that they can play an increasingly useful and positive role in society and make informed choices about their lives both now and in the future.
- High quality teaching and learning experiences support children to be able to lead happy and rewarding lives, now and in the future.

Aims

We aim to develop our pupils spiritually, morally, socially and emotionally through a commitment to our Christian values and beliefs in the practices of our Catholic faith. Cultural diversity is embraced and celebrated within the school community and children from other faiths are encouraged to develop in their own faiths.

- The principal and staff, in active partnership with the Board of Governors, will encourage each pupil to fulfil his/her intellectual, physical and creative potential through the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.
- In St. Joseph's we aim to establish a nurturing community wherein the pupils, teachers and support staff enjoy a sense of belonging and feel that they have an important part to play in the whole education of our pupils
- Our aim is to develop the whole child, to cultivate self-confidence, self-esteem and independence, to enable him/her to make positive contributions to the local and wider community and society in general
- We aim to create a calm, caring environment where pupils experience high quality teaching that enables children to reach their potential
- Our aim is to help children develop habits of self-discipline and acceptable standards of behaviour

The school works towards these aims by:

- Promoting high quality learning and attainment
- Providing a high quality nurturing learning environment
- Valuing each other and ourselves ensuring positive relationships are fostered
- Working in partnership with parents and the community

Strategies for Learning and Teaching

- Teachers engage in collaborative planning that focuses on pupils' needs
- Lessons are well prepared and, where appropriate, activities are differentiated according to pupils' needs.
- Teachers use a variety of teaching methods and an appropriate mixture of whole class, group and individual activities which take account of the range of learning styles and abilities
- Classrooms and outdoor learning environments are arranged in a way to suit the learning needs of the children

- Relationships are central and the example of Christ is to the forefront
- Children are encouraged to form positive relationships with their teacher, peers and other members of the school and wider community.
- Children are involved in planning, and are praised for the good things they do.
- They are encouraged to become increasingly autonomous learners.
- They are appropriately challenged with learning experiences which are relevant to their lives and interests and are inspiring, motivating and engaging.
- Planning has been developed to ensure it is purposeful and useful for the teacher. They are working plans
- Language modelled and used by all adults within the school should reflect our nurturing, caring ethos and enable children to develop their unique giftedness and self-esteem
- Teachers use quality resources that engage and motivate pupils
- Teachers encourage pupils to be involved in their learning
- Teacher promote high levels of pupil self-esteem and confidence
- Pupils receive quality feedback that focuses on improvement and success criterion.
- Pupils are encouraged to engage in self and peer evaluation
- Homework is provided to consolidate work done in school
- Parents are provided with feedback from performance and offered advice and support to help promote learning.

Pupils have access to resources, strategies and materials that encourage the promotion of healthy minds.

Quality First Teaching

At St. Joseph's P.S. we believe that good teaching is when teachers (and other school staff)

- Form positive relationships with the children in their class and other members of the school and wider community, following the example of Christ
- Plan lessons effectively which take children's prior learning and current assessment into account and are appropriately differentiated in order that the lessons consolidate, build upon and extend learning for all children
- Insist on high expectations of learning and social behaviours
- Ensure that effective direction and support is given in order that the children make good progress
- Demonstrate secure subject and pedagogical knowledge in order to inspire children and build their understanding
- Apply a range of teaching styles which appropriately match the children's learning styles in order to sustain their concentration, motivation and application
- Develop and sustain good links and focussed communication with parents/carers in order to support the children's learning
- Develop and maintain safe, secure and inspiring classroom and learning environments
- Demonstrate effective lesson organisation

- Effectively assess and monitor children's progress in order that they can extend children's learning both within individual lessons and over time
- Use resources effectively, including other adults, to support children's learning
- Investigate and use interventions to enhance learning
- Use technology effectively in order to support children's learning
- Develop the range of reading skills required to access all the curriculum effectively
- Use questioning effectively to gauge and extend children's skills, knowledge and understanding

What is a good lesson?

At St. Joseph's P.S. we believe that a good lesson should comprise of the following elements:

- Planning – teachers have a clear understanding of subject knowledge and set targets for each child that they can achieve – well planned and differentiated
- Have high expectations – there is optimism about and high expectations of success
- Use nurture principles and language when engaging with all
- Introduction to the lesson – an engaging hook and clear purpose
- The intended learning and success criteria is clearly shared
- Main teaching – modelled and high quality examples provided
- Group teaching and independent activities
- Interactive – pupils' contributions are encouraged, expected, extended
- Characterised by high quality oral work
- Well paced – there is a sense of urgency, driven by the need to make progress and succeed
- End of the lesson; plenaries and/or mini plenaries within the lesson
- Use of assessment and evaluation – before, during and after the lesson

We recognise the importance of key skills. Opportunities will be made available across the curriculum to develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities and

- Application of number
- Communication
- Computing skills
- Problem solving
- Working with others
- Improving own learning and performance
- Creative thinking
- Enquiry
- Information processing
- Reasoning
- Evaluation

Curriculum Planning

St. Joseph's P.S. planning is based on the following requirements

- Grow in Love programme
- The Northern Ireland Curriculum
- The needs (skills and knowledge) and interests of the children we are teaching

Schemes of Work

The schemes of work in school are in place for the core curriculum areas

Communication – Talking and Listening, Reading and Writing

Using Mathematics – Processes, Number, Shape and Space, Measures, Handling Data

World Around Us – Topic Areas

The Arts – Topic Areas

P.E.

A matrix of topics taught is devised and schemes devised to ensure no unnecessary repetition of work.

From the schemes **medium term plans** are devised (half-termly)

- This is based on a topic approach using the statutory requirements of the N.I. Curriculum
- Planning is monitored by coordinators and Principal.

Short Term Planning

- Weekly plans/daily plans are devised and written in Teachers' Planner books.

Classroom Environment

We aim to provide as immersive a learning experience as possible to engage pupils further in their learning. Pupils are involved in creating this. There are key questions asked at the beginning of new topics etc. to ascertain areas the children have already learnt to help teacher gauge an appropriate baseline or starting point. Displays will have explicit links to the curriculum. Where possible, they will include interactive displays. They should inspire learning and celebrate the achievement of all pupils.

The classroom environment should be both language and numerate rich and organised in a way that promotes and encourages independent and further learning opportunities. Working walls in core subject areas will be updated regularly and provide good quality support prompts/methods and guides that the children can access easily.

Classroom charters will display clear rights and how to respect these

The role of classroom assistants

We have a number of classroom assistants who play a central and specialised role in our learning processes. Key elements of their role are:

- To support the teaching: either through direct delivery or by enabling access for identified children
- Supporting a small group within the classroom
- Delivering intervention groups under the guidance of the teacher
- Carrying out assessments
- Preparing resources
- Supporting children with Special Educational Needs or Statements

Behaviour Management (please refer to positive behaviour policy)

We believe that excellent standards of behaviour are central to effective learning. Our behaviour policy reflects the school's nurturing principles and outlines our procedures relating to behaviour both within the classroom and in the wider school environment. Outstanding learning behaviours are encouraged, praised and rewarded with smiles, prizes, stickers, certificates etc. The school has its unique CAPPY programme. This focuses on positive character traits we want to develop in all within the school community. The school also uses Take Ten programme to encourage children to relax and be prepared for the school day. A counselling service from Barnardos is also available for children who are distressed and finding it difficult to access the curriculum. Children are taught how to manage feelings when distressed or angered.

Assessment

Marking and feedback is done throughout the lesson to effectively support the child and ensure accelerated progress is made. Assessments are used to inform future planning and daily planning. It is also used to determine if interventions are necessary.

Inclusion and Diversity

St. Joseph's is an inclusive, nurturing, Catholic school that promotes each and every child, no matter their educational, physical, cultural and faith need. We endeavour to ensure the active participation and progress of all children in their learning.

- Successful inclusive provision at St. Joseph's is seen as the responsibility of the whole school community, permeating all aspects of school life and applicable to all our children.
- All children will be given full access to the curriculum, unless their statement of educational needs dictates otherwise. Staff will actively support all children to reach their potential regardless of academic ability, race, gender or age.
- Children who receive additional or extra support, including those with statements of educational need have learning plans tailored to their needs. These are followed as far as possible as part of the normal classroom teaching but sometimes require specific input involving withdrawal from the main classroom environment for short periods of time.,
- Inclusive practice across the curriculum should enable all children to achieve their best possible standard: whatever their ability, and irrespective of gender, ethnic, social or

cultural background, home language or any other aspect that could affect their participation in, or progress in their learning.

Roles and Responsibilities

Learning and teaching is a shared responsibility and all members of the school community have an important part to play (See homework policy)

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 according to ability and aptitude
- Ensure that learning is progressive and continuous
- Be good role models, punctual, well prepared and organised
- Keep up-to-date with educational issues
- Provide clear information on school procedures and pupil progress
- Have a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise
- Establish links with the local community to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life

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
- Ensuring early contact with school to discuss matters which affect a child's happiness, progress and behaviour
- Support the school's homework policy and give due importance to any homework
- Ensuring that all contact addresses and telephone numbers are up to date and correct
- Allowing 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:

- Attending school in good health, maintained by adequate diet, exercise and sleep
- Attending school regularly and punctually
- Being organised, bringing necessary equipment, taking letters home promptly etc.
- Conducting themselves in an orderly manner in line with the expected behaviour policy
- Taking increased responsibility for their learning

The community is invited to support the school by:

- Contributing to activities, such as assemblies, specialist outings, clubs, joint community/school projects
- Presenting themselves as positive role models to be emulated
- Organising activities and events throughout the year to extend and deepen pupils' knowledge and skills
- Supporting school events

Homework

Homework is considered to be a valuable element of the learning process (see homework policy)

At St. Joseph's we use homework packs for years 1-3 to encourage interactive learning with parent and child. Homework diaries are used in all other classes and provide children with an opportunity to record their learning and behaviour outcomes with parents. Children are expected to take pride in homework and keep their learning logs up to date. Additionally, more formal activities may be set by the teacher depending on the needs of the children.

We believe that homework should be set:

- To involve parents in their children's learning
- To help parents keep abreast of what their child can and cannot do
- To take advantage of the home context to apply learning
- To encourage children to talk about their work to their parents and explain what they are doing and how
- To extend the time for learning, thus enabling children to practise and consolidate their skills and knowledge and strategies
- To prepare children for post primary school experiences of homework
- To view learning as a life-long process and not just restricted to school hours

The school's agreed practice for homework is that

- Homework is set on a regular basis, for all years, in line with our homework policy
- Homework will generally follow on from work which has taken place in class but may take many different forms, including learning, reading, writing. It should not entail new ideas that require explanation from a teacher
- Homework may sometimes consist of preparation for work yet to be done
- Children should understand exactly what they are expected to do, how to do it, and how long it should take
- Homework should sometimes involve the participation of the parents
- Children who have made insufficient effort during class time may occasionally be asked to complete work at home

Monitoring and Evaluation

Pupils' work will be monitored and moderated regularly in each of the core curriculum areas by teachers, fellow colleagues, coordinators and school management. Teachers are reflective

practitioners, focusing on work going well and work needing further development. Teachers share ideas regularly and on occasion team teach.

Teachers regularly consult with each other when drawing up plans and monitoring children's work to ensure work is interesting, appropriate and learning is progressive

Teachers are involved in Trusted Colleague Networking and collegiate book discussions take place on at least four occasions during each academic year. Subject teachers and principal regularly monitor children's work.

Adopted March 2019

Review due 2021