

St. Michael's Catholic Primary School

Teaching and Learning Policy



Approved by:	LGC
Last reviewed on:	December 2025
Next review due by:	December 2027

St Michael's Catholic Primary School

Aim

At St Michael's we believe that our children will learn most effectively when they have access to a rich, deep and systematically planned curriculum that meets their diverse needs, academically, socially and spiritually. To this aim, we have developed (and continue to develop) a curriculum where children gain knowledge and revisit that knowledge over time so that it is firmly embedded. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum that is engaging and inspiring and encourages our pupils to be lifelong learners. The following six areas are central to the construction of each curricular area and underpin how our subjects are implemented across school.

We aim to provide an environment in which children are challenged by high expectations, encouraged to be active, caring and self-disciplined members of the school community and develop both spiritual and moral awareness. The broad and balanced curriculum on offer will reflect the aims and ethos of the school through:

- Language rich environment
- Recapping of substantive knowledge
- Modelling
- Skills focused
- Discipline distinctive
- Modern, bespoke and challenging curriculum

Principles of Teaching and Learning

Learning is the purpose of the whole school and is a shared commitment. At St Michael's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that education involves children, parents, staff, governors, the community and Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust, and that for optimum benefit all should work closely together to support the process of learning. Working in partnership, we aim to:

- provide a supportive, positive, healthy, caring and safe environment, which has high expectations and values all members of the school community;
- recognise the needs and aspirations of all individuals and provide opportunities for all pupils to make the best possible progress and attain the highest personal achievements;

- ensure children can develop as literate, numerate and technologically competent individuals, within a broad, balanced, exciting and challenging curriculum;
- provide rich and varied contexts and experiences for pupils to acquire, develop and apply a broad range of knowledge, skills and understanding;
- provide a curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical, mental and emotional development of the pupils;
- develop individuals with lively, enquiring minds, good thinking skills, self-respect, self-discipline and positive attitudes;
- encourage all children to be enthusiastic and committed learners, promoting their self-esteem, self-worth and emotional well-being;

develop children's confidence and capacity to learn and work independently and collaboratively; develop enduring values of respect, honesty, equality, integrity, tolerance, fairness and trust;

- encourage children to respond positively to the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities of a rapidly changing world;
- encourage children to value the diversity in our society and the environment in which they live;
- encourage children to become active and responsible citizens, contributing positively to the community and society.

As a school, we are committed to our mission statement – ‘I have come so that you may have life, and have it to the full’ (John 10:10) and our school value ‘Come as you are and grow with us’

Ethos

Our ethos at St Michaels Catholic Primary school facilitates a lifelong journey of learning. To achieve this, our staff create a safe environment in which our children challenge themselves and each other to think beyond their perceived boundaries. We develop a love of learning that extends long after they leave our school, starting within our Nursery classrooms. Our teaching and learning engages our children in our wide-ranging academic and curriculum that provides bespoke support and challenge to every child – irrespective of ability, interest and learning need. We have the highest expectations of our children with regards to their attainment and progress, and believe that every child is capable of significant achievement when at St Michaels and beyond.

The ethos and atmosphere underpin the agreed aims of the school. In the course of their daily work the staff will contribute to the development of this ethos through:

- providing a calm and effective working environment, in which each child can produce his or her best work;
- providing a welcoming environment, in which courtesy, kindness and respect are fostered;
- providing positive role models;

- providing a fair and disciplined environment, in line with the school's behaviour policy;
- effective management of their professional time;
- developing links with all stakeholders and the wider community;
- valuing and celebrating pupils' success and achievements;
- reviewing personal and professional development in order to ensure a high level of professional expertise.

Roles and Responsibilities

Learning and teaching is a shared responsibility and all members of the school community have an important part to play. (See Home-School Agreement)

All members of the school community should work towards the school's aims by:

- esteeming children as individuals and respecting their rights, values and beliefs;
- 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 work;
- working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another.
- fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community; Teachers will endeavour to:
 - provide a challenging and stimulating curriculum designed to inspire our children to be the best version of themselves;
 - recognise and be aware of the needs of each individual child according to ability and aptitude;
 - ensure that learning is progressive and responsive;
 - 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;

- work collaboratively with all involved in education to develop a shared philosophy and commonality of practice.

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;
- actively supporting the Home-School Agreement.

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 own learning.

The community is invited to support the school by:

- contributing to activities, such as assemblies, specialist outings, clubs, etc;
- 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;
- voluntarily helping in the classroom.

Organisation

The learning environment will be managed in such a way as to facilitate different styles of learning.

Opportunities will be made for:

- whole class teaching;
- group work, organised according to appropriate criteria (i.e. ability, mixed ability, friendship, etc);
- one to one teaching;
- conferencing;
- collaborative learning in pairs or groups;
- oracy skills;
- independent learning.

All areas of the learning environment will be planned for, including, where appropriate, the outside areas, in order to ensure opportunities for a range of practical activities, which will develop appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding.

Classrooms provide a stimulating and purposeful learning environment, including thought provoking and stimulating displays.

Adaptations

Although children follow the same sequence of lessons, teachers adapt a particular lesson to ensure all pupils are supported and challenged on their learning journey. Adaptation strategies in lessons may include:

- Pre-teach of key concepts and vocabulary
- Starting points planned so that all can be successful
- Adult support utilized to cater the needs of the children and task.
- Targeted catch up through same-day interventions
- Emergent needs are catered for by tweaking lessons

- Provision of different types of resource
- Organisation of the classroom
- Questioning and racy skills used to stimulate learning and understanding
- High quality scaffolds to aid learning
- A curriculum that emphasizes mastery of skills
- Extension tasks to master the learning.

Teaching Strategies

Language Rich environment

The explicit teaching of vocabulary to create a language rich environment is an essential component of each curricular area at St Michael's. Key subject specific vocabulary is identified in our detailed schemes of work and taught explicitly by the teacher throughout each lesson. Adaptations such as pictorial clues, simplified definitions and oracy based activities are used to supplement pupils who need additional support. The high focus on subject specific vocabulary in each and every lesson has ensured that our classrooms are language rich and stimulate pupils to use subject specific words in context more successfully in their independent work.

Recap of substantive knowledge

Each curricular area has predefined key knowledge identified and organized in our detailed schemes of work. Teachers are clear on what knowledge is needed in each lesson and linked vocabulary that needs explicit instruction. As a school we know that our pupils need frequent reminders of key information and skills to ensure the atomicity of information retrieval and to ensure information has been passed to the long-term memory. Each lesson begins with a recap of key substantive knowledge from the previous session and also a recap of key knowledge from the previous term's unit of work.

Modelling

Teacher modelling is a key feature of our curriculum. Teachers model in a variety of ways which help pupils to develop their understanding of key information and skills. Teachers at St Michael's model for example how to construct a descriptive piece of writing as well as compose detailed comprehension questions. Modelling helps pupils see the thought processes that underpin learning – teachers help to make this explicit through detailed modelling of the processes with the view that pupils internalize these behaviours and they become second nature.

Skills focused

Each curriculum area has a detailed skills progression which is well planned and progressive. Skills are distinctive and unique to each curricular area for example in Geography the analysis of maps skills is taught explicitly and developed whereas in History using sources to inform and develop historical understanding is a key skill that is taught to pupils to develop their historical understanding. In addition, the application of digital literacy skills acquired in Computing lessons is encouraged across subject areas as a way to develop cross curricular links and give pupils a real-life opportunity to apply skills taught. As

previously mentioned, under the recap section, key skills are recapped and revisited to ensure pupils are given multiple opportunities to develop and hone their understanding in depth.

Disciplinary distinctive

A key feature of each curricular area at St Michael's is about ensuring that subjects are taught with complete fidelity to the distinctive discipline that each area is concerned with. For example, we encourage pupils to 'Write like a...' in an attempt to make each different discipline unique and inspiring. In addition to this we regularly supplement our curriculum with real life visits from people in various industries. Furthermore, this year we will hold a 'Community Week' where we invite various people into schools to speak about their careers and their pathways into this area.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The teaching and learning cycle ensure that monitoring and evaluation is systematic and cohesive throughout the academic year and is the responsibility of the SLT. Included are:

- data analysis and progress tracking;
- focused learning walks;
- book scrutinise;
- pupil progress meetings;

Subject leaders have a variety of roles. These include: taking the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in their subject throughout the school;

- supporting colleagues in their development and implementation of the scheme of work, and in assessment and record-keeping activities monitoring progress in their subjects;
- taking responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for their subjects;
- keeping up-to-date through reading and attending relevant courses.

Assessment

At St Michael's Primary school, we believe that assessment should place the child at the centre of their learning and that it should raise achievement for all. We focus on the progress of each individual child. Assessment is not a singular activity; it is both about the measurement of performance at a given point in time and an ongoing process of gaining information to promote future learning. We believe that this process should be thorough, manageable and relevant.

We use assessment to ensure children reach their full potential. We aim to foster in our learners, a lifelong love of learning while developing the skills, knowledge and understanding to achieve to the best of our abilities.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment is the most crucial type of assessment as it informs the next steps in teaching and learning. It is also an opportunity to find out which children are reaching expected progress and those exceeding or falling behind. This information should be used to ensure that any children who are falling behind are helped to catch up. We believe that teachers know their children better than anyone and are the most accurate judges of their children's progress. We use a range of information to inform teachers' formative assessments.

The National Curriculum and the Programmes of Study provide the backbone of our formative assessment framework but, as they are not ready to use as an assessment framework in themselves, we have developed a set of progression documents for each of the core subjects. These documents also provide the basis for all teacher assessments of children in all of the subjects providing clear broken down statements of yearly expectations.

Summative Assessment

Children will be given formal tests in the core subjects of Mathematics and Literacy at three points in the school year: End of the Autumn, Spring and Summer term.

We believe that summative tests need to be as robust as possible so that they can provide the most accurate information of how our children are doing in line with national averages. For Mathematics, Reading and SPAG we use the NFER standardised tests and precious SATs papers. We are confident of their robustness as they are drawn from a large sample size.

The shared language of testing in our school will be 'Expected Standard (EXS)', 'Working towards National Standard (WTS)' and 'Working at Greater Depth (GDS)'.

Teachers will report their findings of their data from the summative assessments during a pupil progress meeting. A pupil progress meeting will take place three times per year- shortly after the summative tests. This allows teachers to talk about their data especially regarding SEN, EAL and FSM children. The data from the summative tests helps to inform interventions and next steps for students (alongside the formative data).

Marking and feedback

We believe that effective marking and feedback provides our children with the necessary information to improve their learning while also offering an opportunity to celebrate their efforts and achievements, and instill a sense of pride in all that they do. A responsive cycle of assessment (by the teacher and child) ensures that our children are able to identify their next steps and our teachers are able to plan subsequent learning activity effectively to support future learning. The underlying premise of our approach is to ensure that our children have ownership of their learning and the opportunity to respond to their successes and areas for development in a positive way. We use a simple system of colour and marking codes to visually show children where they are at with their learning. Highlighters are used to indicate the extent to which children have been successful with the lesson's learning objective (WALT and WILF) and success criteria. The colour codes are:

- Go for Green: this shows that our children have achieved the Learning Objective or Success Criteria – examples of this may also be highlighted in the body of the text
- Think Pink: this shows that our children have not yet achieved the Learning Objective or Success Criteria - examples of this may be highlighted in the body of the text to give our children the visual cue to polish and improve their work with support when appropriate.
- Next step stickers: Children are given next step stickers by teachers to move their learning forward. These are subject specific questions intended to focus on specific skills and outcomes that may not have been reached in the lesson.