Saint Joseph's Primary School

Teaching and Learning Policy

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Introduction

At St. Joseph's we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and in the idea that both adults and children learn something new every day. Learning and Teaching should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone. We aspire to equipping children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices and solve problems in their everyday lives.

1. Aims for Learning and Teaching

At St. Joseph's Primary School, we undertake to:

 To enable children to become confident, disciplined and enquiring learners.

 Raise levels of achievement for all pupils, enabling them to achieve their personal best.

 To empower children to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.

 Foster a love of learning.

 Foster self-esteem and personal responsibility, linked to respect for the needs, feelings and cultures of others.

 Develop a learning environment for all stakeholders.

 Ensure equal opportunities in relation to gender, race, class, special needs and belief.

 Facilitate considerate and positive relationships between all members of the school community.

2:1 Ethos

The catholic ethos and atmosphere in St. Joseph's, underpin the agreed aims of our school.

Teachers will provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which will develop the skills, concepts and knowledge necessary for future learning. In the course of their daily work, the staff will contribute to the development of this ethos by:

 Reflecting the catholic ethos in their beliefs and actions and teaching

 Respecting themselves, others, their property and the environment

 Being honest – in actions

 Modelling Catholic ethos – everyday

 Positive attitude –promoting positive thinking

 Working hard

 Taking pride in achievements

- Valuing everyone in school community
- Acknowledging – celebrating success
- Sense of belonging – loyalty
- Freedom to be oneself
- Developing thinking skills

2:2 Equal Opportunities

All children at St. Joseph's Primary School must be given full access to the Northern Ireland Primary curriculum. Staff will endeavour to help all children to reach their full potential irrespective of race, gender, age or ability.

3: MANAGEMENT OF STAFF AND RESOURCES

3:1 Management Structure (ensuring effective Learning and Teaching)

- Management Teams within Curricular Areas and across Key Stages
- Structure of Leadership team
- Principal
- SENCO

3:2 Classroom Management

The learning environment will be managed in such a way as to facilitate different styles of learning, with particular regard to Additional Needs (SEN):
- Whole-class teaching
- Group work, organised according to appropriate criteria (i.e. ability, mixed ability, interest, mixed and single gender, friendship groups)
- One-one teaching
- Collaborative learning in pairs or in groups
- Independent learning

All areas of the learning environment will be planned for, including, where appropriate, our new Outdoor Leaning Areas, in order to ensure opportunities for a range of practical activities, which will develop appropriate skills, concept and knowledge.

Learning support assistants, learning support teachers, and external agencies will be employed to support children with Additional Needs, as outlined on their Individual Educational Plans.

3:3 BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

As outlined in St. Joseph's Positive Behaviour Policy, each class will display St. Joseph's School Rules and also an agreed set of class rules designed by individual classes.

3:4 Organisation

The classroom will be organised to facilitate learning and the development of independence. This may require flexibility in the organisation of furniture and resources especially with our introduction of the Northern Ireland curriculum.

- The resources in each area will be grouped according to curriculum subject.
- Learning resources will be available for use at all times, and will be easily accessible.
- Book corners will be comfortable and attractive.
- All classes will use a Library.
- Labels and posters will reflect the ethos within the school.
- Pupils will be involved in the maintenance and care of all equipment and resources.
- Classroom will be organised to facilitate the effective use of Interactive Whiteboard, by children and adults.
- Being a Thinking School, there will be much emphasis visually on Thinking Skills in classrooms and around school

3:5 Learning Resources

Each classroom will be equipped with a basic set of resources and books appropriate to the age range and need of the children. Specialist resources will be stored in the appropriate curriculum resource area and will be regularly audited by the curriculum coordinators.

Pupils will be taught how to use all resources correctly and safely, with care and respect; and with regard for health, safety waste. Care will be taken to ensure that all pupils will have equality of access.

Investigative, problem solving and research based tasks use the following resources:

- Books
- Practical equipment
- Interactive Whiteboard, Videos, cds, dvds
- Camcorder/Digital camera/Web cam
- Computer software
- Internet

School grounds, our outdoor learning area and the local environment
 Visitors / Peers
 Thinking Maps and hats
 Classroom displays

3:6 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Principal and/or Subject Co-ordinators will observe class teachers in a specified curricular area in relation to PRSD, agreed in advance. The procedures for the observations have been agreed on by all staff and are in agreement with the recommended procedures, suggested from Regional Training Unit (SEELB/EA). There is a need for schools to monitor and evaluate the teaching, learning and other processes, which contribute to enabling the pupils to achieve on a broad range of fronts.

A review of such processes will include:
 The quality of the pupils'' participation in classroom work.

 The expectations held by the teachers, the pupils, learning support and their parents, and how these influence the nature and quality of teaching and learning in the school.

 The school's effectiveness in promoting pupils self-esteem and self-confidence.

 The degree to which learning strategies address the needs of individual pupils, particularly of the more able and the lower achievers.

 The nature, quality and effectiveness of marking procedures.

 The use made of homework as a means of reinforcing concepts and monitoring the quality of learning and teaching.

 The effectiveness with which independent learning is promoted in the school.

 The effectiveness of literacy and numeracy teaching across the curriculum.

The use made of ICT to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.

 The extent to which the school engages with the parents in supporting their children‟s learning.

 Opportunity for children to evaluate their own work and assess own learning (AFL)

 The use of Thinking maps and hats to develop children's ability to think appropriately, make decisions and solve problems.

3:7 Differentiation
Teachers will be differentiated by:
 Task
 Outcome
 Teacher/ adult support

Differentiated tasks will be detailed in half termly planners. Learning intentions will be specified for all differentiated teaching. Detailed reference will be made in planning for Individual Education Plans.

3:8 Record Keeping and Assessment
Regular assessments are made of pupils work in order to establish the level of attainment, and to inform future planning. Record –keeping and assessment procedures are defined in our marking policy.

3:10 Screening
Primary Four and Primary Six are assessed using CAT4 Intelligence tests.
All primary children in Primary Three to Seven are assessed in Literacy and Numeracy using Standardised PTE/PTM tests.
Primary One/Two are assessed using Wellcom, Phab 2 or Infant Bury Check. .
Primary Four and Seven are assessed using Standardised Assessment Units for Key Stages 1 and 2.
Primary 3-7 Group reading tests.

Information is collated from all tests, analysed and communicated to class teacher using Assessment Manager/CAT4/PTE/PTM Computer Software.
Children on Additional Needs Register, with difficulty in Reading are screened, twice yearly, careful analysis of strengths and weaknesses is made and feedback is provided to teachers to accelerate learning.

Identified children receive support from the learning support teacher in school.

4: CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
4:1 TEACHING STRATEGIES
In order to ensure equality of access, and effective matching of tasks to needs, teachers will employ a variety of strategies:

 Development of close links between Nursery/Play Schools and Primary One

 Involvement of subject coordinators in the development of individual curricular areas, in order to ensure continuity and progression

 Teacher observation

 Dissemination of Reading Partnership/Intervention Strategies

 Discussion and questioning; (open and closed as appropriate)

 Reviewing work

 Listening

 Brain Storming

 Providing opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation by pupils

 Demonstrating high expectations

 Providing opportunities for repetition and reinforcement

 Providing encouragement, positive reinforcement and praise

 Making judgements and responding to individual needs

 Intervene, as appropriate, in the learning process in order to encourage development

 Use a range of communication strategies

 Provide all children with opportunities for success

 Celebrating children's work

 Physical exercises and Primary Movement

 Brain Gym/ Go Noodle

 Circle time/ PDMU

 Clear structure to all lessons, learning intentions and success criteria displayed in classroom

 Topic-based, cross-curricular teaching

 Educational visits

 Use of ICT and Interactive Whiteboard

 Assessment for learning and self-assessment

 Revisit previous learning

 Planning Boards - What do you know already…? What do you want to find out…? How will you find out…?

 Thinking maps to develop TSPC

 Outdoor Learning Area

 Target-setting

Play/Activity-Based Learning

Teachers may use a range of above strategies in any one lesson: ensuring that there is provision for choice and that children have ownership of their learning.
Teachers, as far as is possible will relate to real-life situations, bring the real world into the context of the children's experiences.

4:2 Learning Processes
Children enter school at different stages of development. Children learn in different ways and at different rates of progress.
In the course of learning children will develop their skills through a variety of processes. These include:
 Investigation

 Experimentation

 Listening

 Observation

 Talking and discussion

 Asking Questions

 Practical exploration and role play

 Retrieving information

 Imagining

 Repetition

 Problem-solving

 Empowering children to make choices and responsible decision-making

 Reflecting and Evaluating

 Thinking

At St. Joseph's opportunities are organised to allow pupils access to these processes, and for them to develop their own strategies to gain knowledge and skills.

4:3 Learning Styles
Teachers will take into account the range of intelligences and learning preferences within the class:

Children learn in a variety of ways, and for this reason it is necessary to ensure that planning incorporates as many styles as possible.

These may include:

- Individual learning
- Collaborative learning in small groups, or in pairs
- One-one learning with an adult or on occasions with a „buddy‟
- Whole class
- Independent learning

4:4 PLANNING FOR LEARNING

Teachers have agreed format for planning which takes into account the range of intelligences and the preferred learning styles of pupils. Planning will include following components of lesson

1 Introduction
- Establish an appropriate learning environment
- Connect the learning to learning intentions
- Paint the big picture
- Agree success criteria

2 Activity – link to range intelligences

Maths/logic Spiritual Naturalist
Musical Emotional Linguistic
Kinaesthetic Visual/spatial

3 Plan for learners through:

Visual Auditory Kinaesthetic approaches
4 Pupils demonstrate knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways

5 Incorporate Thinking maps where appropriate

6 Feedback – self and peer evaluation and celebrate success

7 Review and reflection

4:4 Characteristics of an Autonomous Learner

Our children are continuously encouraged to have /to be:

 Know their own **self**- emotional/social, literacy, spiritually

 Self-motivated, have innate curiosity

 Flexible

 Persistent

 High self esteem

 Confident

 Articulate

 Independent – in thoughts, in actions

 Willing to make and learn from mistakes

 Investigative

 Show initiative

 Creative

 Responsible

 Able to make connections / see patterns

 Aware of progress, strengths, weakness and needs

 Reflective

 Happy – secure

 Risk taker

 Able to use a variety of intelligences and learning dispositions

 Able to demonstrate their learning in a variety of forms

5:1 Role of Board of Governors

It is the Governors‟ role to monitor and review the policy and its‟ practise through;

 Reporting to Principal and Teachers

 To receive reports from Principal

 To attend INSET

 To receive reports on relevant issues, in particular Health and Safety, and to follow up any relevant issues

 To promote and ensure at all times equal opportunities in relation to race, gender, class and belief

 To monitor the effectiveness of the schools teaching and learning resources – use of co-ordinator reports, annual principal report to governors and review of in-service training sessions attended by staff.

5:2 Role of Parents

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

 Ensuring that their child comes to school feeling confident and positive

 Ensuring that their child arrives at school punctually and regularly

 Sharing with the teacher, any problems in school that the child is experiencing

 Supporting the child by attending meetings and open mornings

 Supporting the child and the teacher by becoming actively involved in the operation of Individual Education Plans or Additional Needs (SEN) Processes

 Ensuring that all contact names and addresses are correct and relevant

 Agreeing to support child's positive behaviour

 Agreeing to support school's Homework Policy

 Informing staff of any relevant matters at home which may affect the child''s progress, happiness or behaviour

 Responding to letters sent home by school

 Attending medical, health reviews – completing Medical form annually

5:3 Role of Community

 The community is invited to support the school by:

 Presenting themselves as positive role models

 Supporting school events

 Voluntary help

5:4 Role of St. Joseph's Primary School

In relation to each of the above areas, the school will reciprocate by:

 Responding to all offers of support as far as is possible

 Respecting all information given in confidence

 Giving clear information on the aims and objectives of the curriculum and school procedures

 Setting up curricular meetings

 Displaying School Development Plan and Schemes of work

 Working in partnership with parents to ensure the success of their child, and encouraging parental involvement in working out the way forward for their child's educational future.

Review

This policy is a working document and is therefore open to change and restructuring as and when the need arises.
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To be reviewed yearly