

St Mary's Bryanston Square CE Primary School



EXCELLENCE WITH COMPASSION'

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. And love your neighbour as yourself.' (Mark 12:30-31)

**RESPECT | HONESTY | FORGIVENESS
FEELING SAFE | LOVE | CURIOSITY**

Teaching Learning Policy

Contents:

1. Purpose
 2. Aims
 3. Rationale & Research
 4. What do we teach?
 5. How do we teach?
 6. Monitoring & Leadership
 7. Evaluation
 8. Links to other policies
-

Purpose

This policy provide the outline of the Teaching and Learning expectations within St Mary's Bryanston Square CE Primary School (SMBS), ensuring Quality First Teaching (QFT).

It is to be used by adults working in the school to guide their practice, as well as governors and senior leaders in to support professional development and monitoring activities. The policy will also provide transparency to parents around how their children will be taught and progress within their learning.

The policy will aim to ensure that all staff achieve consistency of excellent practice across the whole school. The policy is central to the core purpose of the school and as such is the cornerstone of many other school policies.

Aims

- Provide clarity to stakeholders in the school's expectations for Teaching & Learning
- Provide the evidence base and rationale for the strategies used
- Ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the school

Rationale & Research

As a school, we wish to make informed and evidence based decisions, which enable all stakeholders to succeed in their respective roles. When decisions are based upon research and evidence, stakeholders have an opportunity to deepen their knowledge and the potential improvement to outcomes.

At SMBS, our school vision of Excellence with Compassion drives all that we do, for pupils, staff, parents and the wider community. The core purpose of our work is to educate the children and young people in our school. Our ambition is for every child, including those who are consider disadvantaged or whom have a special educational need or disability, is for them to achieve to their highest potential and leave our school ready for the next stage of their education/career/life.

Teaching & Learning is a highly complex process and the two processes are intimately related to one another. High quality learning stems from high quality teaching, which, we believe can be summarised by three important elements;

- excellent subject knowledge
- a thorough understanding of pedagogy
- how children learn and high quality relationships within the class

The research base we use to inform our pedagogy (teaching) is:

- The Great Teaching Toolkit <https://2366135.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/2366135/Great%20Teaching%20Toolkit%20Evidence%20Review.pdf>
- Simple Model of Working Memory [Willingham](#)
- Novice to Expert <https://evidencebased.education/novices-experts/>
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Need <https://brooksandkirk.co.uk/understanding-maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-in-education/>
- Forgetting Curve <https://teachlikeachampion.org/blog/an-annotated-forgetting-curve/>
- Explicit/Direct Instruction <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/eef-blog-what-exactly-is-explicit-instruction>

First and foremost, to achieve quality first teaching a well, planned and sequenced curriculum is required. Following this is the understanding and subject knowledge of the staff providing the instruction and direction (teaching) for the pupils, this includes teaching assistants.

Professional development, both internal and external, is therefore key to ensuring that all staff are up-to-date with key pedagogical understanding and subject specific knowledge. We believe that the following statement by Dylan William is crucial to our continuing professional development for all staff:

"Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better."

The Great Teaching Toolkit states

"Professional learning happens when we think hard about our practice and take full ownership of it." (page 4)

and

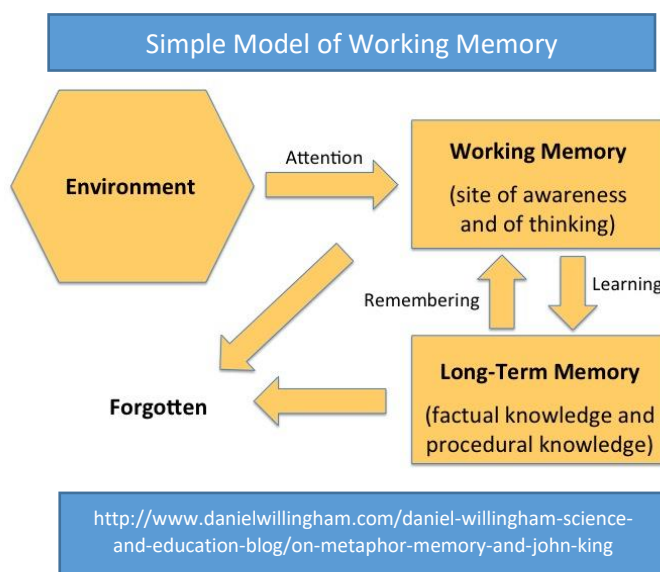
"Everyone in every walk of life can be better. Every teacher, no matter how experienced, can improve, if they want to and have the support to." (page 10).

At SMBS we work hard to provide quality professional development through use of both internal staff and external colleagues.

We know for children to learn well, the environment must be correct and their basic needs must be met. This is why we describe two of the most important jobs at school as: ensuring children are happy and safe. Our approach is informed from Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Willingham's model of simple working memory. Ensuring that these two elements are achieved, allows the working memory of children to be fully activated and not be occupied by distractions in the classroom, or worries related to being unsafe.

What do we teach?

At SMBS we have two curriculum which operate, [The Early Years Framework](#) and [The National Curriculum](#).



The EYF applies to Nursery and Reception classes. The National Curriculum applies to Years 1 – 6 (Key Stages 1 and 2).

The EYF curriculum is broken down in to prime and specific areas:

- **Prime:** Communication and Language, Physical Development & Personal, Social and Emotional Development.
- **Specific:** Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts.

The National Curriculum is broken down in to core subjects and foundation subjects:

- **Core:** English, Maths & Science. Religious Education is also a core subject within a Church of England School.
- **Foundation:** Art & Design, Computing, Design Technology, Geography, History, Languages, Music, Physical Education and Personal, Social and Health Education.

Both curriculums outline the school's statutory obligations for the minimum expectations related to the curriculum offer. Schools are able to complement and enhance the offer of their curriculum above the minimum expectations.

The Senior Leadership Team and subject leaders have worked together, in conjunction with governor approval, to design and plan a curriculum from our 2 year old provision through to Year 6.

Our [school curriculum](#) is broken down into subject specific documents and outlines the expected outcomes and progression for pupils. Within these documents the timeframes and specific learning objectives, including vocabulary is provided.

Where the subject may be specialised, i.e. foreign languages, further guidance documents from external curriculum developers are used. (schemes of learning)

How do we teach?

Securing quality first teaching, is firstly underpinned through the high expectations of learning behaviours. In our school, this is achieved through explicit instruction and modelling of the school's values of ***respect, feeling safe, curiosity, forgiveness, honesty and love.***

Staff create strong relationships with children and create secure routines within their classrooms, to help minimize disruptions and ensure the focus is on learning. In the Early Years examples of this would be through supporting children to self-regulate, using visuals such as good looking, good listening and good sitting, to help children understand. Moving into Key Stage 1 & 2, the use of dojo points to highlight and focus on positive learning behaviours are used and traffic lights to help children regulate. Further information about behaviour systems can be found in the behaviour policy.

<https://www.stmbs.org.uk/policies/>

The environment, not only consists of behaviour, but also in the physical environment in the classrooms and the wider school. Providing a consistent and low-stimulation environment enables a productive and calm environment for all. We achieve this through having an agreed approach to working walls in classrooms and displays (see display policy).

Working walls in classrooms, are to be added to throughout the terms and units of work. They should include new vocabulary, bog questions, photographs and shared work, visual models and examples of pupil work.

All children benefit from direct instruction and clarity of information.

Introducing new content:

Our teaching staff work to ensure that all lessons are clearly presented with small chunks of new information presented to pupils in lessons. This is based upon our knowledge that children can hold around four pieces of information in mind at once.

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) suggests that if the cognitive load exceeds our processing capacity, we will struggle to complete the activity successfully. In summarising CLT, De Jong (De Jong, 2010) states that 'cognitive load theory asserts that learning is hampered when working memory capacity is exceeded in a learning task'

CLT is based around the idea that our working memory – can only deal with a limited amount of information at one time. The theory identifies three different forms of cognitive load#

1. **Intrinsic cognitive load:** the inherent difficulty of the material itself, which can be influenced by prior knowledge of the topic
2. **Extraneous cognitive load:** the load generated by the way the material is presented and which does not aid learning
3. **Germane cognitive load:** the elements that aid information processing and contribute to the development of 'schemas'.

Working memory should be seen as short term and finite, whereas long-term memory can be seen as infinite. The aim should be to move knowledge to long-term memory because when a student is exposed to new material, they can draw on this previous knowledge and the cognitive load is reduced. However, if subject knowledge is incomplete, the student is unable to fall back on the long-term memory and the working memory becomes overloaded, leading to working memory failures.

Indications of working memory failures include:

- incomplete recall
- failing to follow instructions
- place-keeping errors
- task abandonment.

At the same time, too little Cognitive Load can have a detrimental affect on the child's learning. Key ideas to consider;

- Break down subject content when introducing new topics and pause regularly to check understanding.
- Present instructions clearly without using too many sources of information at the same time.
- Be wary of reducing cognitive load too much – the learning process should be manageable, but not overly fragmented.

New content is highlighted in curriculum documents for all subjects. Teachers should be clear in what children should already know and what they intend for them to learn within the session.

Retrieval opportunities:

All lessons will provide pupils with retrieval opportunities, these will be throughout the lessons, but mostly found in the use of questioning or at the beginning of lessons, helping children to frame the new learning.

Retrieval opportunities should take the form of low-stakes activities, such as odd one out, what do you think?, Tell me more... or short multiple quiz questions.

Teachers should think carefully about the presentation of these activities, paying particular attention to possible misconceptions. The purpose of retrieval activities is to help activate the long-term memory, as well as, exposing pupil thinking.

Independent work:

All lessons will involve independent work, where children are expected to complete tasks and activities set by their teacher. Within these tasks, the teacher will have explained clearly the intended outcome and the task should be pitched appropriately, helping to secure and consolidate new learning, as well as stretching and challenging their thinking.

Children will given explicit instructions in the teacher expectations, such as the quantity of work, the contents (through success criteria or checklists) and the timing to complete.

Questioning:

Questioning is a crucial strategy within the teachers toolkit. Teachers are not able to see within the mind of a child or to know what they are thinking, therefore posing questions enable teachers to hear children's responses.

Questions are not simple, and should not just be used without thought. Teachers should carefully consider the use of questions, the framing of them and who to ask to answer. Questions could be closed or open.

Teachers should create an environment within their classroom, where children are comfortable and familiar with the strategy of 'cold calling'. This is where teachers call upon a child for a response, without the child volunteering. When this is complete, children should not feel threatened or anxious. Teachers should ensure that thinking time and space is provided. Cold calling should be frame at the beginning, e.g. "In a moment, I am going to ask you to think about a question. When you have thought about this, I am going to choose some children to tell me their thinking."

Use of resources:

In all lessons, access to resources, visual aids and equipment will give the children the best opportunity to learn. This includes everything from Working Walls, apparatus in maths lessons, to whiteboards and pens, dictionaries and word/vocabulary lists. In addition to children, adults need to ensure they have access to the correct resources from interactive whiteboards, whiteboards, magic paper, and / or flipcharts.

Supporting pupils with SEND:

Our expectations for all pupils, including those with [Special Educational Needs/Disabilities \(SEND\)](#), are for high levels of achievement and to experience excellent, quality first teaching.

For children with Educational Health Care Plans, many of those pupils will work alongside a member of the support staff team, in addition to their class teacher. As a school, we expect all staff to understand and deploy the appropriate strategies for the needs of the pupils.

For those with SEND, it is expected that reasonable adjustments will be made to enable those pupils to make progress appropriate to their developmental stage.

The pedagogical strategies named above are not a checklist to be ticked off in every lesson. We encourage our teachers to use their professional knowledge as to when to deploy these strategies.

Subject policies outline the specific details of which strategies are well suited to promote pupil progress.

Monitoring and Leadership

Subject Leaders complete the monitoring of Teaching and Learning. Senior Leaders and external colleagues, including Ofsted, will also complete monitoring activities throughout the academic year.

Regular visits to classrooms take place throughout the academic term, these are known as Learning Walks and will focus on specific aspects of teaching and learning. Specific feedback will be provided to staff in a timely manner, detailing what has been observed and where adjustment may be needed to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils.

Time for subject leaders to complete their work throughout the academic year are scheduled into the school calendar. Subject Leaders, in discussion, with Senior Leaders and in alignment with the School Development Plan can request additional time to complete monitoring activities. Senior Leaders will consider this request in line priorities for the school and against pupil outcomes and the wider knowledge they have of the quality of teaching across the curriculum.

Formal monitoring from Senior Leaders is completed two to three times a year, this comprises of a 30 minutes observation, followed by discussions with pupils and a review of pupils books. Formal written and verbal feedback is provided to staff whom have been observed.

Governance

The Achievement, Values and Community Committee leads on the governance of Teaching and Learning across the school. This committee regularly invites subject leads to present to and update governors on the quality of teaching and learning in their area of responsibility.

Curriculum visits are offered for governors and one visit per year as a minimum is provided. This enables governors to see teaching in classrooms across the school, as well as view pupil work and speak with staff and children.

The Full Governing Body is responsible for the outcomes (both attainment and progress) of all pupils at St Mary's Bryanston Square Primary School. They hold Senior Leaders to account and will act as the a critical friend in reviewing the information which is presented to them.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed and evaluated on a bi-annual basis.