

St John's CE Primary

Teaching and Learning policy



“Use your God-given gifts to serve others” 1 Peter 4:10

Ratified by curriculum committee: Autumn 2024

Mr D Ricketts (Chair of Governors)

Mrs N Hedges (Head Teacher)

Policy to be reviewed: Autumn 2027

All different, all equal, all growing together.

Vision

St John's is a Church of England school where every child is welcomed, valued and loved. The school's purpose is to serve the community of Sparkhill by providing each child with the education they need to flourish and each family the support they need to thrive. We aim to teach children to look beyond themselves and to serve others with love.

"Use your God-given gifts to serve others" 1 Peter:10

This policy lays the foundations for the whole curriculum, both formal and informal and forms the context in which all other policy statements should be read. It is based on the DfE's *Teacher Standards* Document. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all staff.

It was reviewed by the Curriculum Committee of the Governing Body during the Spring Term 2021. It has since been updated in 2024 to include whole staff strategies for teaching and learning in response to evidence-based research and the adoption of NHS approved wellbeing programme ***My Happy Mind***.

1. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils

- The ethos of the school underpins all teaching and learning. We believe that for all children to succeed, they must feel valued, safe to fail and to make mistakes.
- Every adult in the school must fundamentally believe in the equality of opportunity for all and help to establish a safe and stimulating environment in which children can achieve challenging goals regardless of their backgrounds, abilities or dispositions.
- Children come into school with different experiences and needs. Some children need emotional support before they can learn. St John's School places high emphasis on warm, open and honest relationships with children and families and will provide support to enable all children to be able to learn.
- Staff at St John's School use their knowledge of each child to ensure they receive appropriate support as soon as possible.
- St John's School believes that parents should be involved with celebrating their child's success and should also be made aware of difficulties their child might be experiencing. We believe that important conversations should not be kept until a parents' evening.

For every child, staff must understand:

- Any barriers to learning that the child may be experiencing (FSM, PP, SEND, EAL, SEMH, DA, etc.)
- How he/she learns best (cooperative, individual, group, visual, kinesthetic etc.) and what makes him/her feel successful.
- Any medical needs (including mental health)
- Aspects of the family situation (for example, siblings, multigenerational living space).
- Any previous safeguarding concerns

2. Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils

2.1 All teaching at St John's is based on the assess- plan- teach cycle, ensuring teachers set appropriate standards for all children. This means teachers:

- Give live feedback wherever possible, as this is the most effective way to involve pupil's in their own improvement. Where this is not possible, written feedback is given rapidly and children are given time to read and respond to it if appropriate.
- Mark work and/or record observations to effectively plan next steps in a child's learning.
- Plan lessons to make use of different teaching strategies, enabling children with different learning preferences to succeed.

2.2 Effort and excellence are celebrated in display and performance:

- Children have work displayed
- Excellent work is sent to Senior Leadership Team for a *golden sticker*.
- Two children a week are chosen to be *star of the week* during Friday Collective Worships.
- 'Shine a light' displays celebrate work from across the school.
- School events such as concerts and drama are seen as opportunities for all children (not just the most gifted) to demonstrate their own best performance.

2.3 Home Learning meets the needs of children:

- It is our aim to provide opportunities for parents/carers to work alongside their child or children to support their learning in school. However, St John's also aims to allow time for children to develop as individuals. Many children are already spending at least an hour at Mosque-school in the early evening. We believe it is also important for them to have some time to play, join clubs or participate in sports activities.
- Staff are sensitive to the fact that not all children have academic support from an adult at home. Staff try and ensure that all children are given time in school in which they can complete homework tasks. ***See Homework Policy for further detail***

3. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge

3.1 Teachers are supported in ensuring they have secure subject knowledge by:

- Using detailed medium-term curriculum plans or schemes which the school provides.
- Enabling easy access to all resources and a clear progression of knowledge mapped out from Nursery to Year 6.
- Attending whole staff INSETs which align with the *School Improvement Plan* or are informed by Subject Champions monitoring of subjects.
- Ensuring up to date, subject specific training for Subject champions which is then used to inform and support colleagues.
- Implementing a staffing structure which allows new staff or teachers early in their career to work alongside more experienced colleagues to support them in their planning.

3.2 Curriculum Subject Champions

The school requests that every teacher, who is not an ECT and does not already have an additional responsibility, champions a subject area. Champions take the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in their subject throughout the school. They support colleagues in development of planning, implementation and in using assessment effectively to plug gaps in knowledge. **See *Subject Champions Handbook for further detail.***

4. Plan and teach well-structured lessons

Teachers assess children's knowledge before planning the next steps and assess informally throughout lessons. They are expected to amend the live teaching accordingly. Teachers are required to use retrieval strategies and plan activities to help children lock information into the long-term memory.

4.1 Medium Term Planning

- The curriculum is organised into 4-5 week units. Each unit is cross-curricular and involves children in developing an understanding of a topic e.g. Ancient Egypt through History, Geography, Science, Art and Music.
- All National Curriculum objectives are covered throughout the units. Each project is planned alongside English lessons, including key texts and Tier 1, 2 and 3 vocabulary.
- Teachers provide learning experiences enabling children to draw on a range of skills, attitudes and knowledge to develop new understandings and build concepts.
- What children will **know**, be able to **do**, and how this links into their wider **understanding**, has been mapped for every topic across the school in every subject.
- Knowledge Organisers for each unit have been planned to support parents, teachers, and children in retaining key knowledge.
- Planning is available online to support parents.

4.2 Short-Term Planning

- Weekly plans are drawn up collaboratively by year group partners and monitored by SLT and curriculum leaders.
- English and Maths are taught daily and teachers produce detailed weekly planning for them.
- RE, Computing, Spanish (KS2) and PSHE are taught weekly.
- Children have two PE lessons per week.
- A timetable of the Foundation subjects is produced in less detail, outlining learning objectives for each lesson.
- Teachers are free to organise the timetable in the best way that suits the learning that week. Sometimes subjects are taught simultaneously, other times they may be blocked together across a day. This freedom allows teachers to give more cohesion to the unit.
- Schemes of work for individual subjects are monitored and refined by Subject Champions and Senior Leadership to ensure consistency of approach and standards.
- Members of Senior Leadership are available to support teachers in their weekly planning.

4.3 English Planning

- English is a tool used across the whole school curriculum. As well as being a subject in its own right, it is the cornerstone of the entire curriculum.

- Use of high-quality texts immerses children in vocabulary rich learning environments. Children at St John's are exposed to a language rich, creative and continuous English curriculum which will develop a love of reading, creative writing and purposeful speaking and listening.
- All staff are expected to take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English.

Planning for Reading

- Children learn not just the mechanics of reading, but to become accomplished readers, developing a love of reading for life.
- Each class has a designated reading area to help promote the love and high importance that reading holds in our school. They can enjoy exploring a wide selection of reading books, which helps them to develop an appreciation of our rich literary heritage.
- Story time happens at 3 pm throughout the school daily where a quality story or poem is shared with children at the end of the day. Texts used are carefully selected to ensure children are exposed to age-appropriate texts.
- Teachers embed the VIPERS reading skills and active reading into our curriculum so that children understand different content domains and can apply the skills they have learned during both supported and independent guided reading activities.
- Teachers plan English sessions in line with their units. They follow a three-phase approach whereby children read a specific genre or text and become immersed in the texts; then they explore the language, structure and sentence types within a text; and finally apply what they know to write in response to what they have learned independently.
- Children across the school who need more support with mastering essential decoding, fluency and comprehension skills are given group and individual support from teachers and support staff.

Early Reading at St John's

- Staff at St John's teach early reading through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme.
- Staff start teaching phonics in Nursery/Reception and follow the Little Wandle progression, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.
- Staff follow the Little Wandle expectations of progress. Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.
- Children in Year 1 review Phases 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy. ***See Early Reading Policy for further detail.***

Planning for Writing

- The strands of spelling, handwriting and composition are woven together throughout the curriculum.
- Children develop a growing ability to write in different styles, for different audiences and purposes, e.g. stories, diaries, letters, invitations, captions, posters, plans, reporting on projects and poetry.
- Cohesively planned, modelled and implemented by all staff, writing genres and conventions are creatively developed throughout both key stages.
- Once children have written independently, they are given the opportunity to be the first marker of their work. They also mark collaboratively with peers in KS2 and are taught how to edit and improve their work.

- Children are explicitly taught tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary during the writing process to enhance their spoken and written vocabulary.

Grammar & Punctuation:

- Children are taught the rudiments of grammar progressively from Reception to Year 6, both discretely, as well as in the context of the literature they are studying.
- A variety of Alan Peat sentence types which are planned out for each year group, allowing children to build up a bank of complex sentence structures as they move through school.

Handwriting:

- Children are taught continuous cursive handwriting by learning the different letter families from Year 2. In Reception, children learn to form letters when learning phonics and during writing focus activities. In Reception and Year 1, children use the Little Wandle font when writing.

Spelling:

- The teaching of spelling is enhanced by the 'No Nonsense Spelling Scheme'.
- The scheme is taught three times per week in KS2.
- Teachers strive to create a variety of spelling activities, which are visual, auditory and engaging for the children.

4.4 Maths Planning

- At St John's, we believe that not only do children need to be mathematically fluent, they also need to be able to apply these skills to real life scenarios (solve problems) and talk knowledgeably about mathematical working (reasoning).
- Staff follow the *Ark Maths Mastery* programme, which offers clear progression from Nursery to Year 6.
- The Ark programme builds a key emphasis on using mathematical language accurately in the context of cooperative and inclusive learning. No child is left behind and everyone is supported to make appropriate progress.
- Maths is taught in daily lessons but it is also planned for in the wider curriculum, giving children the opportunity to use their maths skills in other subjects.
- In EYFS and Year 1 and 2, staff follow a daily programme of Maths Mastery (NCTEM). This is an effective 20-minute structure with carefully sequenced steps. Examples, representations and models are carefully selected to expose the structure of mathematical concepts and emphasise connections, enabling pupils to develop a deep knowledge of mathematics.

5. Teaching Strategies:

- At St John's, staff make it a priority to use evidence informed research to help improve teaching and learning.
- **The Education Endowment Foundation** is an independent organisation committed to extensive educational research and guiding schools on how to tackle inequalities in education. Its research into supporting high quality teaching underpins its 2021 guidance report *Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools*. The report cites five specific teaching approaches (*Five-a-day*) as a guide to high quality teaching.
- **Teaching and support staff work together on CPD opportunities (weekly sessions) to embed these 5 approaches into every day teaching practice.**

5.1 EEF 5 A Day Approaches

1. Explicit Instruction

- Teacher-led approaches with a focus on clear explanations, modelling and frequent checks for understanding. This is then followed by guided practice, before independent practice. Examples of this at St John's can be seen in *I do, we do, you do models* and *task not asks*, which promote engagement rather than hands up or excessive teacher talk.

2. Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies

- Managing cognitive load is crucial if new content is to be transferred into students' long-term memory. Examples of this at St John's include low stakes quizzing, use of knowledge organisers and retrieval challenges for units, as well as effective recall questioning.
- Teachers provide opportunities for students to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning.

3. Scaffolding

- When students are working on a written task, teacher provide a supportive tool or resource such as a writing frame or a partially completed example. Teachers aim to provide less support of this nature throughout the course of the lesson, week or term. Examples of these at St John's include *colourful semantics* tools for writing and reading, and visual (widge) images and written support.

4. Flexible Grouping

- Staff group pupils in a way that reduces stigma, ensuring such groups are based on the relative difficulty of curriculum content. Or they group on other teaching and learning needs, rather than being fixed and inflexible.
- Examples of flexible groupings can be seen in cooperative learning structures within lessons and building sentence structures (which also promotes language in the school's EAL context) and teamwork. It can also be seen in grouping children together who need further help in understanding a concept and utilizing adults and peers creatively to support.

5. Using Technology

- Technology can be used by a teacher to model worked examples; it can be used by a student to help them to learn, to practice and to record their learning. For instance, a class visualizer might be used to share students' work or to jointly rework an incorrect model

6. Learning Through Play Approach in EYFS AND KS 1

- Teaching in these year groups is organised through the effective use of continuous and enhanced provision, enabling children to accelerate progress through a play-based approach to carefully planned learning experiences. These environments are engaging and language-rich, with an emphasis on acquiring and mastering basic English and Maths, as well as social and cooperative skills.

7. Adaptive teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils

- Staff recognise that children learn in different ways and lessons are planned to give every child the best chance of success.
- This will include collaborative and individual tasks, opportunities for visual, auditory and kinesthetic learner and the improved concentration that comes from mindful breaks or bursts of exercise.
- Teachers continually assess children's progress throughout lessons through questioning and observation, using this to ensure their teaching helps all children make progress.
- By using teaching strategies listed above, staff improve practice to ensure all learners make appropriate progress.

7.1 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities:

- Most children with special needs (including the most able) have their needs met within the classroom context through high quality teaching.
- Where children have significant and complex needs, their needs are met though learning within one of our SEND hubs. These are children who require a highly individualised curriculum approach differing from that which is offered in the mainstream setting.
- All the learning Hubs are overseen by the AHT responsible for SEND (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator), to meet the varied and complex levels of need.
- The planning in the hubs has Communication and Language at the core of everything it does. With this being the prime area of the children's needs and plans it is crucial that this is a key element of everything that is completed.
- The curriculum has been planned for using the Autism Education Trust documentation. Link are also be made to the EYFS Curriculum, Birmingham SEND continuum's and an adapted version of the schools' mainstream curriculum.
- The advice of SALT, CAT Team and Educational Psychology and other outside agencies has been sought in order to ensure the curriculum meets individual pupils' needs and targets.

7.2 Social, Emotional and Mental Health

- As with all support for children, most emotional support is given in the classroom by a child's teacher. This is why effective relationships are so important.
- Sometimes a child may need more than can be given in a classroom and may be referred to the Nurture Team. The team, in consultation with DSLs will decide on the best course of action, with the focus of a child feeling safe and happy to learn alongside their peers in their classroom. This may include attending nurture groups, additional support in class, reasonable adjustments to the provision, support from outside agencies. This process always includes the involvement of parents.
- A whole school approach to wellbeing has been adopted with the **My Happy Mind** programme. This is an NHS approved syllabus that is grounded in the latest science and research about what it takes to create positive wellbeing. It is taught to every child.

7.3 Disadvantaged Children

- Disadvantaged children are not a group that all have the same academic needs and there is not one strategy to support them.

- At St John's School, every child who is eligible for pupil premium has any barriers to learning identified and support is put into place to overcome these.
- All staff meet to discuss and identify barriers which are individual to each child.
- St John's School has a detailed Pupil Premium Strategy plan which outlines how funding is used to support children. <https://www.st-johns-pri.bham.sch.uk/pupil-premium/>

7.4 English as an Additional Language

Over 90% of the children at St John's have English as an Additional Language and it is therefore given a high priority. Most children in school are working at a Stage D (Competent) or E (Fluent) on the ***English Proficiency of Pupils with English as an Additional Language (February 2020) Department for Education.***

Support strategies for all EAL learners

- In the context of high-quality teaching, staff provide a language rich environment and children are immersed in taught vocabulary, which is regularly revisited.
- Staff model good use of standard English and correct grammar mistakes.
- Teachers adaptive opportunities matched to the individual needs of EAL pupils
- Additional verbal support-repetition, alternative phrasing, peer support
- Teachers use tiered vocabulary displays and explicit teaching within English and reading curriculum.
- Additional visual support is offered, e.g. posters, objects, non-verbal clues, pictures, demonstration, use of gesture etc.
- Further support for pupils' language development is provided outside the formal curriculum, e.g. in assemblies, school clubs, homework clubs, etc.

8. The Role of Specialist Staff:

All teachers must be able to teach all subjects to their classes although we have some specialist teaching:

- sports coach
- teacher of Spanish
- musical instrument teaching from Services for Education

9. The Learning Environment:

Classrooms at St John's School must be set up in such a way as to enable:

- free movement
- all children to be able to see the whiteboard either on the carpet or from their chairs
- access to a book corner area where children can read and enjoy reading
- quality cooperative learning i.e. tables are placed appropriately
- access to the sink to wash hands/ get water
- positive behaviour
- access to labelled resources
- access to meaningful activities for use during independence time/ when work is finished

9.1 The Classroom Environment is inclusive to children with a range of SEND

- Staff use visual timetables to help children to know what is coming next.
- Classrooms have clear spaces between display boards and displays are low arousal to avoid over sensory overload.
- Children's working areas are carefully considered (light levels, placement, smells, distractions)

- and individualized work spaces are made available when appropriate
- Staff make effective use of visual prompts and scaffolds e.g. task boards and now/next boards, communication boards.

9.2 General Displays in the classroom

In classrooms, the following displays and prompts enhance learning:

- English Working walls from Y3 – Y6 show the journey of reading and writing process within a unit studied. This should include children’s own work.
- Little Wandle Phonics Display in Reception, Y1 and Y2 classrooms to help children.
- Maths Meetings Wall
- Learning Journey Road Map which shows the unit learning over the year and helps children recall prior learning.
- RE display which celebrates world faiths/philosophies and shows current RE unit title in line with *RE Today* syllabus.
- Colourful Semantics Cards teaching as a scaffolding tool
- Vocabulary triangle to display tier 1,2 and 3 word cards to refer to daily.
- Book Corner areas are welcoming and engaging, offering children a range of texts to explore without overwhelming them.

10. Make accurate and productive use of assessment

10.1 Summative Assessment:

- Children’s progress is tracked across school using Insight Tracker and there are three assessment windows over the course of an academic year.
- In Foundation Stage staff use Birth to Five matters to gauge what age band children are working within and to highlight areas of need to develop within the provision.
- In Year 1 and 2, teachers complete a teacher assessment against the Maths and English curricula.
- In Years 3, 4 and 5, children sit three standardised tests which provide the teacher with a 100-score. This information is compared to the child’s start point (their result from the previous statutory test) to ascertain whether or not the child is on-track (and therefore making expected progress).
- Pupil progress meetings are held three times with SLT, after each assessment window. This enables staff to keep a track of progress across the whole school.
- Teachers in Year 6 also use three assessment windows, but use past SATS papers in order to judge progress.
- Statutory assessments are carried out in the following areas: End of Reception though EYFSP, Year 1 PSC and Year 2 PSC for those who didn’t pass in Year 1, Year 4 MTC and End of KS2 SATS. These processes are moderated by the local authority.
- Reporting to parents is done on a termly basis through consultations and annually through a written report.

10.2 Formative Assessment:

- Staff assess within and after lessons so that they know what to teach next and what misconceptions children might have had.
- Throughout lessons, teachers use mini-plenaries, observation, effective questioning, whiteboards, interactive tasks.
- Teachers also use low stakes quizzing and tasks to promote engagement for all and to assess gaps in knowledge.

10.3 Feedback/ marking

- Quality feedback includes verbal feedback, teacher assessment, self and peer assessment.
- Live feedback, given as the child is learning, is the most effective type of marking.
- Written feedback is given only when oral feedback cannot be used. Teachers only write comments that will make a difference to a child's progress.
- Children are taught how to self-assess using the success criteria. A dialogue should be visible in books in upper KS2.
- Teachers acknowledge effort, comment on achievement, and identify something the child can improve on (the "NS" or next step).
- At St John's CE Primary School, we believe that all lessons should have clear learning objectives that are shared with the children. This enables both the teacher and learners to maintain clarity in the session.
- Each LO should have clear and specific success criteria. These form the basis of the teaching during the lesson and help children to understand what to do in order to be successful.
- In EYFS, teaching staff need to know what each child can do and plan playful opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills further. Recording observations help staff to build a clearer picture of each child. ***See the Feedback and Marking Policy for further detail.***

Review:

This policy is reviewed by the Curriculum Committee of the Governing Body of St John's CE Primary School.

Last review: Autumn 2024

Next review: Autumn 2027

