

St Pius X Catholic Primary School



TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

OUR MISSION

Together in God's loving family,
we believe, we learn, we grow.

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AIMS

At St Pius X Catholic Primary School we provide an exciting and enriching curriculum for all of our children, which balances our pupils' development of knowledge and skills. We firmly believe in creating future citizens, who are able to positively impact our community. Through our [six school values](#), which are based on the Beatitudes, we place Christ at the centre of all we do and inspire all of our pupils towards excellence. We aim for all of our children to become independent, resilient learners, where they are able to take risks and challenge themselves. Overall, we are committed to instilling a love of learning and encouraging children to pursue their own passions beyond education.

Our Six School Values, and the role models representing them, are:

1. Integrity - Martin Luther King
2. Fairness - Rosa Parks
3. Peace - Malala Youzafsai
4. Kindness - Mother Teresa
5. Forgiveness - Pope Francis
6. Service - David Attenborough

Through our curriculum, we want pupils to:

- understand their responsibilities to our local community and the wider, international community
- develop respect and understanding of our multi-cultural community
- develop lively, inquisitive minds to encourage lifelong learning
- develop as confident learners with the ability to question and debate
- develop as reflective learners: striving for excellence in everything they do
- develop resilience: adopting a growth mindset to meet challenges without fear of failure
- develop their reciprocity skills: building effective partnerships for learning
- develop their resourcefulness: capitalising on resources.

This teaching and learning policy is intended to promote consistency and high standards in teaching across the school which will achieve our school aims and lead to consistently high levels of pupil achievement.

We believe that teaching and learning encompasses a range of inter-linked activities and processes, namely:

1. Pedagogy - How we teach
2. The curriculum - What is taught: knowledge and skills
3. Assessment - How we know what has been understood and retained

This policy aims to define how these elements fit together to provide an effective teaching and learning offer.

1. Pedagogy

Our approach to teaching and learning is based on up-to-date educational research. We expect teachers to demonstrate the following key elements of effective practice in the daily delivery of high-quality learning experiences:

- Begin each lesson with a review of previous learning
- Clearly communicating the subject being taught and the learning intention
- Sharing of success criteria or involving pupils in their creation through use of WAGOLL (what a good one looks like)
- Present new learning in small steps with opportunities for practice
- Frequently ask questions and check pupils' responses
- Provide models
- Check for understanding
- Provide scaffolds as appropriate
- Provide opportunity for independent practice
- Ensure opportunities for retrieval practice are built in throughout the lesson
- Provide varying means of demonstrating new skills and understanding, both recorded and practical
- Provide opportunities for talk partners to help develop children's understanding

Retrieval practice promotes knowledge retention and the feedback it generates allows the teacher to identify and address gaps in knowledge. Pupils returning to what they have been taught should understand that this is an integral part of an ongoing learning process and that it is deliberately planned for, to allow for links to be made and schemas of understanding to be strengthened.

Building Learning Powers

At St Pius X Catholic Primary School, we believe that it is our role to develop a habit of lifelong learning within our pupils. In order to achieve this, teaching must work to strengthen four key learning muscles/behaviours:

Resilience:

Absorption – Teaching must engage pupils so that they are able to be absorbed in what they are doing

Managing Distraction – Pupils must be enabled to recognise and reduce distractions; they must recognise the best environment in which to learn

Noticing – Pupils must be able to perceive subtle nuances, patterns and details in their experiences.

Perseverance – Pupils must be able to keep going in the face of difficulties and challenge the energy of frustration productively.

Resourcefulness:

Questioning – lessons must encourage the children to ask questions of themselves and others

Making links – pupils should strengthen the ability to see connections between disparate events and experiences

Imagining – pupils will strengthen their ability to use imagination to explore their learning

Reasoning – pupils must be able to think logically, construct arguments and spot flaws in the arguments of others

Capitalising – pupils must be able to access and use the full range of resources from the wider world.

Reflectiveness:

Planning – identify all the issues that may be encountered

Revising – change plans where necessary, monitor and review progress and identify new goals

Distilling – look at what is being learned and be able to identify the essential features

Meta learning – pupils must develop a self-awareness of their learning styles, how they learn best and be able to talk about the process

Reciprocity:

Interdependence – know when it is appropriate to learn individually or collaboratively

Collaboration – pupils must be able to manage themselves in collaborative ventures and respect other points of view

Empathy & listening – contribute to others experiences by listening carefully

Imitation – constructively adopt methods, habits or values from those who are observed

Staff will praise pupils with specific language to celebrate how they have achieved these behaviours. Staff will also give house points to children demonstrating these learning powers.

Certificates will be given out in Celebration Assembly to celebrate pupil achievement in the 4Rs.

Effective Feedback Techniques

To ensure high quality engagement from all children, effective feedback techniques are used as part of daily classroom practice at St Pius X Catholic Primary School. The following guide has been shared with all staff members:

Effective targeted questioning

When to use:

Used as assessment for learning. Effective in most lessons to further develop higher attainers' thinking and reasoning skills and also to support lower attaining children access the learning.

Use this [developing questioning document](#) to support with higher level questioning (in line with Bloom's Taxonomy).

'Build on Me'

Great to encourage lower attainers to share ideas. Teacher targets more basic questions (lower down on Bloom's Taxonomy) to specific children and then asks another child to build on what they have said to develop ideas and thinking further.

Choose Two

When to use:

The 'choose two' strategy is best suited to a **longer response to predictive/creative questions where there is no 'right' answer**. It is however a very versatile strategy that can be used for most longer responses. If using for anything other than a predictive/creative answer, it is better that the choice of partners to respond not be 'random'; you will have already heard 'model' responses from these pairs during partner talk time. Therefore this feedback strategy is only effective when some partner talk time has been given beforehand.

Example questions suited to this strategy:

- *'What do you think Red Riding Hood will do when the wolf leaps out of the bed?'*
- *'What problems might Hansel and Gretel encounter when they enter the forest?'*
- *'If you were the Big Bad Wolf, how would you deal with the Three Little Pigs?'*
- *'What else could Bethany have done if Rumpelstiltskin hadn't spun the straw into gold?'*

Procedure:

After children have engaged in partner discussion, the teacher chooses two sets of partners (not individual children) to share their responses with the class. The teacher paraphrases/repeats them to clarify and gives specific praise if appropriate.

Choral Response

When to use:

The 'choral' strategy is best suited to a **short response where there is only one correct answer**. The question will therefore be very closed, possibly a 50/50 forced alternative. This feedback strategy differs from all the others in that you will rarely need to allow partner talk time beforehand. It is therefore the quickest of all the feedback mechanisms.

Example Questions suited to this strategy:

- *What punctuation do we end a question with?*
- *How many bears were there in the Goldilocks story?*
- *Is 'dog' the subject or the object in this sentence?*
- *Is 'mysterious' an adjective or a verb?*

Procedure:

The Teacher could indicate a choral response is needed in a number of ways, e.g by saying the first syllable of the answer or by saying 'one, two, three' after asking the question or by holding their hand to their ear. Children all give their response in unison.

Paraphrase

When to use:

The 'choose two' strategy is best suited to situations where a long response is required and there is one or more 'right' answers. It is however a very versatile strategy that can be used for most longer responses. This strategy is unlike all the others in that it is the teacher alone feeding back. The key point of it is therefore to allow the class to hear a 'model' or 'ideal' response. It can therefore be used to lead everyone in the correct direction, or to 'plant' the right idea should the children not be able to arrive at it themselves!

Example questions suited to this strategy:

- *'What impact does this simile have on the reader?'*
- *'Why does personification make writing more descriptive?'*
- *'Why has the author chosen to use a metaphor here?'*
- *'How can you tell this is an adverbial phrase?'*
- *'Why is this written in the passive voice?'*

Procedure:

As the children engage in partner discussion, the teacher listens to a few pairs and then paraphrases (or claims to have heard!) the best response to the class.

Word Wave

When to use:

The 'word wave' strategy is best suited to a **short response with a range of possible answers**. The question will therefore be more open than with the 'choral' strategy. This feedback strategy is most effective when some partner talk time has been given beforehand.

Example questions suited to this strategy:

- *What adjective would best describe how Cinderella felt when she couldn't go to the ball?*
- *What synonyms can you think of for 'big'?*
- *What adverb describes how Red Riding Hood crept up the stairs?*
- *What would you be able to see if you were on this beach?*
- *What sounds might you hear in a street market?*

Procedure:

After the children have engaged in partner discussion or had some silent thinking time, the teacher passes their arm over each child in turn. Only when the teacher's hand is over them does the child offer their response. The others remain silent until it is their turn.

Popcorn

When to use:

The 'popcorn' strategy is best suited to a **short-medium response with a range of possible answers**. Unlike a 'word wave', it does not require the teacher to move around the room. It also allows children to potentially give slightly longer responses than would be possible with a 'word wave'. This feedback strategy is most effective when some partner talk time has been given beforehand.

Example questions suited to this strategy:

- *'What adverbial would describe how the cat crept towards the house?'*
- *'What word would work instead of "shocked" in this sentence?'*
- *'What are the features of an instructional text?'*
- *'What phrase could we replace "upset" with to "show" instead of "telling"?''*

Procedure:

After the children have engaged in partner discussion or had some silent thinking time, the teacher passes their arm over each child in turn. Only when the teacher's hand is over them does the child offer their response. The others remain silent until it is their turn.

Variations:

- **By table/row:** for medium length responses (e.g. *'what do you think Jack found as he opened the door to the giant's house'*) eliciting answers from each table or row via 'popcorn' can be a much quicker and more inclusive alternative to 'take two', 'paraphrase' or the traditional 'hands up'.
- **Partner 1/Partner 2:** As effective 'popcorn' does require perseverance on the part of the teacher and training on the part of the children, a stepping stone to 'whole class popcorn' can be to separate the class in half via 'partner 1' and 'partner 2' and elicit answers from each half separately.

Whiteboards

Quick and easy way to assess children's understanding. Teacher asks a question for all and the children then show it on their whiteboard.

It is then important for the teacher to use targeted questioning effectively to further develop specific children's understanding.

Group responses - Actions

Can be effective as an assessment tool and when providing children with a question with two clear choices. The teacher decides on an action for the child to do to represent an answer (touch your head or fold your arms). The teacher then shares the two choices, the children have thinking time and then show their action.

Can be an effective way to get all children involved and when a snappy answer is needed.

Example questions suited to this strategy:

- 'Which word do we think better describes how the character walked: sauntered or trudged?'
- 'Do you think Jack should have sold his cow for some magical beans?'

You can then target your follow-up questions accordingly (asking the children to justify etc.) based on the binary responses you received.

2. The Curriculum

Our curriculum is bespoke to St Pius X and was designed to address the needs of our pupils and their context. It is broad and balanced and aims to provide inspirational learning experiences, develop cultural capital and equip our pupils with a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding. Where schemes of learning are used, teachers are expected to adjust content as appropriate to meet the individual needs of their pupils. Curriculum planning is carried out meticulously by teachers, under the instruction of Subject Leaders, to ensure that pupils' knowledge is built progressively and coherently across the school. Teachers are explicit about the specific knowledge or skills that are being taught and where this fits into the bigger picture. Teaching should be motivating and engaging through first hand practical experiences, in and out of the classroom, including trips. We believe in ensuring that our curriculum acknowledges the local context of the school and makes links wherever possible.

We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability and teachers will scaffold learning as appropriate, rather than group children by ability or allocate different tasks. Teachers adapt teaching in a responsive way by, for example, providing focussed support to pupils who are not making progress. When planning work for children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) we give due regard to information and targets contained in the children's One Plan documents. We have high expectations of all children and believe that all children should be included in the full range of educational opportunities here at St Pius X.

3. Assessment - [Effective Feedback Policy](#)

At St Pius X, assessment is an ongoing process that we believe is fundamental to effective teaching and learning. It is vital that teachers know what has been understood and retained and plan subsequent lessons accordingly.

Formative assessment practices are a part of everyday classroom routines. We expect to see teachers using the following where appropriate:

- quizzes
- low-stakes testing
- regular high-quality questioning
- peer assessment
- self-assessment
- regular retrieval practice

Retrieval practice should be woven throughout the fabric of all teaching and learning. Research tells us that bringing information to mind enhances learning so giving children opportunities to deliberately recall information is vital and should be a part of every lesson.

Summative assessment is carried out termly in core subjects, as instructed by the Assessment Lead, and recorded on Target Tracker. Foundation subject assessments are recorded on subject tracking grids.

Teachers should plan exciting and innovative ways for children to demonstrate what has been understood and retained. While written work is vital to children's literacy development, we

recognise the great value of practical lessons in constructing and consolidating children's understanding. Where practical work is carried out, teachers evidence this by taking photos and sharing the children's learning on the [school blog](#). This is also a way for parents to support with their children's learning and to improve home-school engagement.

Monitoring of teaching and learning

The Senior Leadership Team, alongside Subject Leaders, follow a termly monitoring schedule to monitor quality of teaching and attainment in each subject. This is done through use of the following:

- pupil voice
- lesson drop-ins
- book looks

It is an opportunity to celebrate and share excellent practice and to ensure our pupils are receiving consistently high quality learning experiences. Teachers will be given development targets and progress towards these is monitored in the subsequent monitoring cycle.