



ST.THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Teaching and Learning Policy

Reviewed: November 2019 Next review date: November 2021

Mission statement

We are a Roman Catholic Community committed to:

- Mutual respect, positive encouragement and participation
- Recognising the different personal and educational needs of all the pupils
- The delivery of the full National Curriculum together with the religious education syllabus approved by the Catholic Church
- The highest standards of teaching, learning and performance
- Maintaining a supportive partnership with pupils, parents, guardians, the parish and the wider community
- The professional development of all staff

Aims

At St Thomas of Canterbury School we aim to:

- Encourage, nurture and develop enquiring minds and a lifelong love of learning
- Make children feel safe and valued within an open and friendly environment
- Help children develop respect for themselves, others and the environment within a Christian ethos
- Equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices
- Enable the children to develop the self-confidence necessary to realise their potential
- Encourage children to be independent, reliable and positive members of the community
- Involve parents and carers as partners in their children's education
- Develop pupils as resilient, independent, inquisitive, happy and proud learners

Teaching

At St Thomas' we have high expectations of all our pupils and base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's levels of attainment. National, local and our own school data will be used to raise these expectations and standards.

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Staff upload weekly plans onto staff shared area (Common) and the Headteacher checks them periodically. These set clear objectives taken from the National Curriculum 2014, building on pupils' previous achievements.

Marking should be consistent and worthwhile (See Marking and Feedback Policy)

Staff will endeavour to ensure that:

- They have sound knowledge of the subject matter to always deliver quality first teaching. If they are unsure, they will seek support from the relevant co-ordinator or curriculum group. They will also seek advice on appropriate courses to reinforce their understanding
- They set attainable targets for the children which challenge the pupils' abilities to improve and extend their knowledge and understanding
- Their planning is thorough, effective, has sound educational objectives and is differentiated to meet the needs of the children
- They use appropriate classroom management techniques to establish a working atmosphere, in a disciplined yet child-friendly, happy and tidy classroom
- They use their time and the resources available in an effective manner
- Part of their teaching includes continuous assessment to inform future planning and target setting
- Homework set is used to support classroom learning. Teachers will also be prepared to explain homework to parents who are struggling to understand. The policy is available for all to view on our website
- Children with SEN have equal access to the curriculum according to their abilities and receive any additional support advised after consultation with the SENCO and support staff.

Learning

At St Thomas' we acknowledge that people learn in many different ways and therefore a range of strategies are used that allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them.

Since September 2019 we have developed a more focused curriculum where we teach some subjects in termly blocks. We have restructured the school timetable to allow time for a more in-depth understanding of fewer topic areas termly rather than surface level understanding of more content. One of our aims is to improve long term memory.

We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved, as far as possible, in reviewing the way they learn, and to reflect on how they learn.

We believe that children learn best when they:

- Are happy
- Are interested and motivated
- Achieve success and gain approval
- Are given tasks which match their ability and provide appropriate challenge

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- Clearly understand the task
- Are confident, feel secure and are aware of boundaries; are challenged and stimulated
- Are in an organised and calm working atmosphere

The learning environment is organised so that children have the opportunity to work individually and co-operatively, allowing them to solve problems, make decisions, use initiative, discuss ideas and develop social and organisational skills.

Achievement

Social, physical, creative and academic achievements are celebrated in many ways.

- Praise by teachers, peers, headteacher and parents. This is the most effective tool in raising pupil's self respect and willingness to improve
- Displays help make our classrooms attractive learning environments and reflect the children's efforts as well as the topics being taught
- Opportunities to perform or share
- Encouraging self esteem
- The awarding of stickers, castle points and certificates
- Sharing success with the school community

Assessment and Target Setting

Assessments are regularly carried out in accordance with the school's Assessment Policy.

Target setting is based on data entered on to Target Tracker alongside sound teacher judgement.

Equal Opportunities

All children have the right to equal access to the curriculum regardless of their ability and learning opportunities are provided to match to the individual needs of children.

All extra -curricular activities at St Thomas' are open to all children in the appropriate year group/groups, numbers permitting.

Teaching Assistants

We deploy learning assistants as effectively as possible. They support individual children and small groups as well as assisting teachers with planning, assessment and the practical day to day running of the classroom.

Voluntary Helpers

Voluntary helpers are a valuable resource and we welcome their involvement in the classroom. Help can be on a regular basis or for a specific event. In all cases it is important that the teacher should take the time to ensure that the volunteer fully understands and is well prepared for the activity in which he or she is to be involved. (See Confidentiality and Visitor Policies) They are also fully DBS checked and invited to all Safeguarding training. This training is mandatory for regular helpers.

Supply Teachers

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To ensure continuity, supply teachers are given written guidance and suggested activities for all planned absences from the classroom. In the event of an unplanned absence they have access to planning.

Resources

Maths, science and art equipment is kept in central areas but some basic equipment e.g. paint pots, counters etc. is kept in individual classrooms.

Sets of textbooks are kept in central areas or individual classrooms where appropriate.

KS2 classes have sets of dictionaries and thesauri.

There are reference and fiction libraries for KS1 and KS2 that can be accessed by staff and pupils.

Reading scheme books are also easily accessed by the pupils.

The Role of Parents

We recognise that parents are the first teachers that their children experience and that, once children come to school, the responsibility for continuing to develop their learning, is a shared one between home and school. We ask that parents promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general and fulfil the requirements set out in the Home/School Agreement

The following strategies are in place to facilitate this partnership:

- Before the children start in Reception a letter is sent home and parents are invited to bring their children for two afternoon visits. Parents are encouraged to leave their children at the second one. A meeting is also held to explain the school's approach to reading. All new parents are given a starter pack and a school prospectus
- Once in school children are provided with a reading/contact book through which parents can be kept informed of their child's progress in reading and parents are able to state any queries or concerns they may have.
- Parents are sent year group letters three times a year which outline the curriculum topics to be covered
- An open afternoon and parents evening are held in Term 1/2. Parents are invited to a Parents evening in Term 3/4 and a written report is sent home in terms 5/6 with a parents evening available for those who would like to discuss the written report.
- Parents are also able to make appointments to see their child's class teacher at mutually agreed times.
- Regular meetings are also held with parents of children on the SEN register.
- Parents are invited to class and Celebration assemblies as well as whole school and class Masses
- There is an information board outside EYFS classroom
- The school website is regularly updated

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- Regular parent surveys
- Weekly electronic news letters
- Parents can volunteer to help in school and are encouraged to attend PTA meetings and events Reviewed: January 2019

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