

# St Mary's Bryanston Square CE Primary School

## Teaching and Learning Policy 2004

### Mission

St Mary's serves the local community and welcomes the children who come here. We aim to provide an education informed by the Christian ideal, which will enable all children to fulfil their potential.

### Aims

- To ensure that, when children leave St Mary's, they have a desire to continue to learn
- To equip children with the tools necessary to positively influence their own lives.
- That when pupils look back on their time at school, they will do so with positive regard to the experience they received.

### What are we teaching?

At St Mary's we have a responsibility for the **content** taught to our children. This is based upon the National Curriculum. We are also responsible for the **qualities** that we trying to develop in our children (such as cooperation, perseverance, responsibility and independence).

### How do we teach?

At St Mary's, children learn within several contexts: **lessons, routines, events and the overall ethos of the school**, all of which need to be well used and carefully managed. Teaching styles, the environment, rules/behaviours and an awareness of individual needs are all key to how this is achieved.

Effective teaching requires a variety and balance of **teaching styles**, ranging on a spectrum from whole class didactic or interactive teaching through to individual exploratory work or interactive group/paired work. The learning preferences of children should be considered and there should be a balance of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic experiences. In recent years we have been using the theory of Accelerated Learning to develop our teaching. Key characteristics include the need to embed learning within a context, to clarify intentions, to demonstrate understanding and to review learning in order to commit it to memory. We have also been developing an understanding of Visual Literacy, whereby complex pictures and drama are used as a stimulus for a wide variety of learning. What is important is that the appropriate teaching style is employed for the appropriate learning event so that our aims are most effectively met.

Children learn well when the **environment** in which they find themselves is supportive, well ordered and well managed, where there is discipline and clarity about expectations. Environments will vary depending on the curriculum content or the skills that are being developed. For example, paired work is well suited for developing cooperative skills and classroom chatter is acceptable if discussing learning as a group.

If we want children to work for different purposes, with different audiences, using different skills and different approaches, then it becomes obvious that **appropriate rules and behaviour** have to be expected in each of the range of environments that the pupils use. Essential to good discipline is simplicity and clarity. For more details, please refer to our Behaviour Policy.

All children have different needs. We need to be **aware of the individual contexts** of children. We need to offer the appropriate support/challenge in order for them to be successful, through differentiation of tasks. For further details of how we meet additional needs, please refer to our SEN (Special Educational Needs), EAL (English as an Additional Language) and AG&T (Able, Gifted and Talented) policies. Please also refer to our Inclusion and Race Equality Policies as well as our Equal Opportunities and Aims and Values Statements.

## What do we need?

- a calm, safe and healthy environment that will foster **positive relationships** and show children that they are valued, thus enabling them to feel positively about their learning
- a clear **knowledge of skills** that are important for children at each phase of their development and opportunities for these to be practiced
- a **clear purpose** in children's learning and an **understanding** of why they are being asked to do any activity
- **high expectations** of all children
- to **challenge** children to **apply** what they have learnt to different situations
- to communicate **excitement** and an appropriate sense of **pace**
- a **variety** of styles of teaching throughout a unit of learning
- to **celebrate achievements**

Children learn best when learning is planned, based on what pupils already know, understand and can do. **Assessment** must inform the individual learning strategies for pupil progress. Teachers and children should know where they are now and what they need to do next to improve. Learning activities must be **matched to needs** and **linked to previous learning**. We need to encourage children to take **ownership** of their own learning, including time to **reflect and review** progress made. Please refer to our planning, assessment and recording policy.

## What resources do we use?

The effective use of **space**, large and small, is a key element of effective teaching. Careful thought about **furniture**; how it is placed, how it is used or who is allowed to use it, will create the opportunity for learning to be successful. Approaches to **time** should allow for flexibility. For example, at times, children may be given longer, reflective experiences or may be expected to meet deadlines - giving them a sense of urgency and control. If children are to use new skills for the right purposes and develop the right approaches, then they must know how to use **apparatus and materials**. They need to know what they are for, how to use them properly and where to keep them. There should be programme of resource development matched to need and led by curriculum coordinators.

In our fast developing world, **ICT** resources must be a central resource to our teaching - ensuring that children develop the appropriate operational skills but also using it as means to motivate and involve children interactively - offering them communication opportunities beyond the confines of the classroom. The continuing use of Interactive Whiteboards should be seen as an opportunity to engage children with different learning styles more effectively. Their interactivity is the key to their successful use in the classroom. For more details, please refer to the ICT policy.

Finally, learning takes place with the support of many **adults** - both parents and school staff. It is essential that all people who work with our children know ways in which they can influence children's learning. Deployment of support staff needs to be planned to be effective and children need to know how to access that support with confidence.

## **How do we monitor and develop teaching and learning?**

Monitoring of teaching and learning is through formal and informal classroom observations, by talking with children and staff, by analysing children's work and by reviewing evaluated planning. Each person who is monitored receives feedback, with key areas for school development and individual training needs built into the school improvement process.

Curriculum coordinators carry out monitoring of curriculum areas at least once every year. These are scheduled according to our monitoring calendar. Monitoring has a focus taken from the relevant curriculum action plan. More details to support coordinators in this area can be found in the relevant coordinator file. Observations and issues that may arise are reported to the school management team.

Core subjects will be prioritised and monitoring of these is expected at least twice a year.

Further school improvement monitoring, with an agreed focus that is based upon teaching and learning, will be carried out each half term by the school management team.

## **Appendices**

- Strategies for differentiation
- St Mary's Accelerated Learning Cycle
- Hierarchy of skills
- Questioning techniques