

St James' CE (Aided) Primary School

Teaching for Learning and Curriculum Policy 2022

Aims

This policy is intended to provide an overview of teaching for learning and the curriculum at St James' CE Primary School. Whilst individual teachers have their own styles, and teaching should be adapted to the needs of the class, it is important that St James' pupils have access to the same quality of teaching throughout the whole school and that learning is consistent across classes and year groups.

We aim to develop pupils who are well rounded individuals, ready to contribute to society and who have a lifelong love of learning. We believe that resilience, creativity and independence are key skills every learner should develop.

Our curriculum is an entitlement for all children, regardless of social background, culture, race, gender, differences in ability and disabilities, to develop and apply the knowledge, skills and understanding that will help them become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

The Christian ethos of the school promotes a culture in which individuals are respected and valued and is reflected in all curriculum areas as well as in our approach to working together as adults and children within the school community.

The symbol of St James is the pilgrim's shell. As each child journeys through school, we seek to support them by laying firm foundations, growing and learning together from the teaching of Jesus about wise and foolish builders.

I have come in order that you might have life - life in all its fullness.





Teaching for Learning

Pedagogy

At St James' we believe that high quality first teaching is vital to children's success. Whilst we acknowledge that different lessons lend themselves to different styles of teaching and learning we recognise several foundations which make up good pedagogy. We therefore agree that every lesson should include:

- Short, effective teacher inputs, including high level questions
- Lessons that start with either a RAP task, to reflect on or recap previous learning, or an engaging activity for the children
- Talk is worthwhile, structured and purposeful and develops learning behaviours e.g. interaction and collaboration
- **High expectations** and appropriate **challenge** for all through adaptation so that learners are actively engaged
- Learning behaviours (metacognition) developed purposefully e.g. praising effort and learning skills rather than outcome, providing choice to develop independent learning, teaching pupils how to reflect on their own learning
- Safe and supportive learning environment which encourages pupils to take risks and promotes a Growth Mindset
- Children know what/why they are learning; the learning is contextualised and relevant; it meets the needs of 'our' children from each of their starting points with visible progression which builds on prior learning.
- Effective feedback given to move learning on. To follow the marking policy this should be little or no written feedback but next steps for learning given through RAP, verbal feedback (given by teacher and/or peers) or differentiation in next lesson

We know that learning can take place at three different levels: shallow, deep and profound.

Shallow learning is teacher led and can include activities such as Phonics, times tables, facts and spellings. **Deep** learning encourages children to use the skills they have acquired in shallow learning and to become more responsible and independent in their learning. Examples of deep learning are applying mathematical facts to solve simple problems, reading comprehension, writing stories and colour mixing to create artwork. **Profound** learning is when what children have learnt becomes personal to them and allows them to engage with ideas and thinking. For example; creating ideas, creating music or drama to perform, sharing knowledge with others, problem solving and investigating.

The activities listed in shallow learning are valuable and necessary but if children remain stuck at this shallow level they are unable to make links in their learning or to use what they already know to build their learning and they could become passive and unquestioning. Therefore, we strive to provide opportunities for deep and profound learning for all our children.

We do this by providing opportunities for pupils to reason, explain, justify, answer higher order questions, collaborate, and solve problems on a regular basis.





Curriculum Intent

Our Curriculum for our learners

St James' is a large primary school in the centre of Tunbridge Wells, a Spa town in the South East of England with a commuter link to London. At St James' we have a small catchment area, however this holds a changing demographic and we benefit from a diverse mix of cultures and ethnicities. We aim to deliver a curriculum which is suited to the needs of all our learners here at St James'. Tunbridge Wells hosts many nurseries and secondary schools with different characteristics including, but not limited to, forest schools, grammar and faith schools, and our pupils transit between a number of these as they enter and leave primary education. It is therefore our role to prepare our pupils for a variety of different education systems when they leave Key Stage 2, building on a wide range of foundation experiences.

At St James' we aim to educate the whole person. We want each child to flourish academically and to grow in wisdom, informed by the deep tradition of Christian wisdom which offers a healthy, and long-term context for all their growing and learning together. This is enabled by an excellent education, a broad and balanced curriculum, with a rich variety of experiences that extend beyond the classroom.

At St James' there is a high level of parental engagement and parents/carers take a great interest in their child's learning. Many of our pupils have opportunities to experience the world beyond Tunbridge Wells whether through real-life or digital connections. It is therefore important that we build on our pupils' individual experiences, teaching them to navigate the world safely and confidently whilst also recognising that not all our pupils will have the same starting points.

Learning at St James' includes an emphasis on learning behaviours such as independence and resilience as we work to prepare our pupils to become successful, lifelong learners.

We aim to develop pupils who are world citizens by celebrating diversity and developing an understanding of the world and their place within it.

Topics

We pride ourselves on our creative approach to planning, plotting the journey through a topic and sharing ways in which we can provide memorable learning experiences. Each topic that children experience is different, to allow for as much coverage as possible over an academic year, and to ensure that from Reception to Year 6, children will experience engaging learning opportunities. We ensure progression through careful mapping of both the subject content and the topic themes to enable children to revisit and build upon their prior learning.

In addition, having a topic-based approach enables us to deliver cross curricular lessons, as there is a common thread throughout all learning. By teaching cross curricular lessons, children are constantly revisiting and embedding their existing knowledge by building on it and applying it in other areas. Research has shown that when learning can be related to real life, it gives it meaning and purpose, and therefore it is remembered. As a result, we fill our curriculum with real experiences, including visitors, theme days, workshops, trips and use of the local area. We also plan a stunning start,





marvellous middle and fantastic finish within our topics. These are designed to hook children into the topic, to reignite interest part way through and to celebrate learning.

Curriculum Drivers

As a school we have identified six key drivers that form the foundation of our Curriculum provision at St James'. These have been established based on our understanding of the pupils we have at our school and their backgrounds, as well as our aims and intentions for their futures. These shape everything we do within our school and are consistently woven into the daily life of the school:

Health and Wellbeing - At St James', our curriculum looks to support and develop the whole child. We recognise that our curriculum is not solely the content of the National Curriculum, but also wider skills and knowledge to support pupils at all stages of life. If we want pupils to learn, they must have high levels of wellbeing and feel comfortable and supported.

Learning for Life - We aim to give pupils the 'tools' they need to continue to embrace learning as they move on from St James', recognising how we learn and the skills needed in order to acquire the knowledge and skills of the curriculum and beyond. We acknowledge how a love of learning stems from an individual and, whilst we can provide engaging activities and learning opportunities, individuals must have personal learning skills in order to make the most of these.

Responsibility/Legacy - Pupils have opportunities to take responsibility at different levels throughout the school – including class special helpers, playground buddies, CW monitors and sports teams. We encourage pupils to be responsible for their belongings and their learning – homework tasks, focus and effort in class. This builds so that pupils can recognise how their actions can have an impact on others and their surroundings as well as recognising how they can have an impact on wider global issues such as climate change.

Community - We recognise the diverse nature of our school community. Pupils will identify the different communities they belong to and our roles within these. We support others and appreciate differences as well as recognising similarities. We celebrate diversity within the school, locality and beyond.

Natural World - We recognise that we live in an exciting and ever-changing world. We identify how we can use the resources provided by the planet to support our mental and physical health as well as exploring what we can do to protect it. We study the world around us, both near and far, to gain a greater insight into the processes and events that shape our lives

Creativity - We are all creative and we can express this across all subjects and areas of learning. Creativity is recognised as the exploration and generation of new ideas, not solely arts-based learning. We encourage our pupils to embrace their creativity and recognise how this can support their learning across all subjects and areas of the curriculum.

Progression of Skills and Knowledge

To ensure there is progression throughout year groups, each subject has a specific set of skills and knowledge which should be taught within each year group. These progressions are used when planning each topic to break down the learning for each subject, within each year group, into smaller





stepping stones. They give teachers a step-by-step guide for the order in which the content of a subject should be taught. This ensures that children develop specific skills needed, in a logical order, to achieve the overall goal. It also ensures that, as units are revisited each year, the specific skills focused upon are a clear development of the prior learning.

As a school we are currently developing knowledge planners that make explicit the key, 'sticky' knowledge that should be included in each topic. Like the current skills progression, this knowledge will build as children move through the school and provide a clear framework for planning each topic so that opportunities to revisit and revise core knowledge are exploited fully.

Characteristics of EYFS

We follow the guidance of the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021* to ensure we meet the standards required to support children to learn and develop well and to keep healthy and safe. The overarching principles of the Framework, which shape the practice of Early Years settings, are:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Teaching in Reception at St James' Primary School is delivered in accordance with the requirements of the Framework. This specifies the areas of learning to be covered across the EYFS and the intended outcomes for the end of the Early Years. Development Matters 2021 is also used as guidance for assessing across the EYFS.

Our learning environment is carefully planned in line with these requirements to ensure thorough coverage of the seven areas of learning and development. There are three prime areas which are essential for children's development and learning. These are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

These prime areas are seen as the foundation to learning and enable children to develop specific skills in a further four areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World





Expressive Arts and Design

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is considered essential for children's development and we ensure a careful balance between learning through child-led play and activities guided by adults. Towards the end of the year, the balance will shift slightly to ensure the essential key skills and knowledge are consolidated in preparation for the transition to Year 1. Children will, however, continue with the Early Years approach and assessment as needed in Year 1.

In all activities and learning opportunities, consideration is given to the development of characteristics of effective learning. These are skills children need to acquire in order to become resilient learners. Three characteristics of effective learning as highlighted within the Early Years Statutory Framework are:

- playing and exploring children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **active learning** children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.
- **creating and thinking critically** children develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

These are also connected to our school 'Learning Powers' and are explored further as the children progress through the school.

Characteristics of KS1

Key Stage 1 comprises of Year 1 and Year 2. In this phase we focus the children's learning and experiences on local issues and familiar interests. Much of the learning at this stage is focused on enabling children to identify who they are and understanding themselves and their local area. The children are supported to develop the skills and characteristics necessary to access learning opportunities (for example confidence, trying new things...). We endeavour to ensure children enjoy their time at school whilst developing the fundamental skills and knowledge to support life-long learning.

In order to provide a smooth transition from Reception to Year 1, the first half term in Year 1 reflects many of the approaches used in Foundation Stage teaching, including opportunities for child-initiated learning, independent challenges and adult led focus groups. After half term, children begin the transition into whole class teaching for English and Maths; building up to 45-minute lessons each day by the end of the year. In addition, children will also have specific Phonics teaching and take part in group reading three times per week following the Little Wandle Phonics Scheme. Foundation subjects are delivered through a combination of whole class, focus groups and independent challenges.

Year 2 includes a similar approach to Year 1 in many subjects, however English and Maths lessons increase to 1 hour per day. There is again, a gradual shift towards whole class lessons when the children are developmentally ready.





Our home learning primarily consists of daily reading. In KS1, children are expected to read at home every day following the Little Wandle for Letters and Sounds Scheme and beginning to use Accelerated Reader when ready in Year 2. Children are allocated a phonic based text matched to their phase. This text is shared in school in the group reading sessions and then accessed at home through the ECollins online library. To supplement this and ensure children continue to be exposed to physical books, we send home 'Sharing Books' for the children to read with an adult. These may be read to the child or used to support recognition of tricky words or sounds they have been learning as well as developing comprehension skills through discussion.

Characteristics of Lower Key Stage 2

Lower Key Stage 2 comprises of Years 3 and 4 and is often called the 'Middle Phase'. In this phase we aim to bridge the gap between the Lower and Upper Phases. We do this by making the learning less child centric and more outward looking, extending learning beyond the immediate area and time periods and developing more understanding of the wider world.

As children move through the school into Key Stage 2, learning moves towards more whole class teaching, while giving pupils plenty of opportunities to work collaboratively, independently and with support as appropriate for the needs of the child, the learning focus and content of the lesson. As much as possible, subjects are taught through topics but with a clear understanding of which subject specific skills are to be developed. Daily English and Maths lessons continue much as in Key Stage 1 with Reading skills incorporated into weekly English sessions alongside access to Accelerated Reader texts for home reading.

Our homework allocation is designed to increase as pupils move through the school whilst still remaining manageable and reasonable for the age of the child. In Year 3 there is handwriting and spelling homework, with Maths work also being included in Year 4. We recognise that parents/carers must manage homework time according to their child's needs or other things going on at any given time. Of much more importance than quantity is the quality of homework.

Characteristics of Upper Key Stage 2

In Upper Key Stage 2, we begin to prepare pupils for the next stage in their education. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 are encouraged to take more ownership of their learning; for example by engaging in independent research or making decisions about how to present their understanding of a concept. Lessons will give pupils the skills needed to understand a wide range of perspectives as well as the confidence to allow them to form, and express, their own opinions.

In Upper Key Stage 2, homework provides more of an opportunity for children to develop the skills of independent learning, which should increasingly become its main purpose. It is important that teachers share the level of parent assistance that is expected on tasks through contact notes, meetings or the children. By the time children reach Year 6, homework should cover a range of tasks and curriculum content.

Learning Powers and Growth Mindset

We aim to prepare children for real life, and promoting a growth mindset throughout the school, is integral for supporting them to be confident and resilient to challenge. We aspire to equip our





children with the skills and the mindset to grow as learners beyond St James' and throughout their lives.

Celebration assemblies are linked to the Learning Powers and Growth Mindset qualities with certificates being awarded for application of these learning skills and attitude to learning.

EYFS and KS1

It is our belief that all learners need to develop the ability to reflect on how they learn for that learning to be successful. For this reason we have established eight 'Learning Powers' within the school. Each element is represented by a different character:

- Curly Wurly the Caterpillar says 'Concentrate'
- Donald the Duck says 'Be Determined'
- Callum the Camel says 'Be Curious'
- Topsy and Tim the Tortoises say 'Be a Team (Co-operate)'
- Ellie the Elephant says 'Enjoy Learning'
- Henry the Hedgehog says 'Have a Go'
- Iggy the Iguana says 'Use your Imagination'
- Charlie the Insect says 'Keep improving'

These characters are introduced from Reception and are embedded throughout Key Stage 1. They are displayed within classrooms and regularly used to support the review of learning.

KS2

In Key Stage 2 pupils build upon these foundations about how to learn by the introduction of the Growth Mindset approach. This is centred on the work of Dr Carol Dweck, a Psychology Professor who states that:

"Recent advances in neuroscience have shown us that the brain is far more malleable than we ever knew. Research on brain plasticity has shown how connectivity between neurons can change with experience. With practice, neural networks grow new connections, strengthen existing ones, and build insulation that speeds transmission of impulses. These neuroscientific discoveries have shown us that we can increase our neural growth by the actions we take, such as using good strategies, asking questions, practicing, and following good nutrition and sleep habits."

Pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught the difference between a Fixed Mindset (where intelligence is seen as something which cannot be increased) and a Growth Mindset (where the strategies above are used to increase capacity). They are given a framework of language to discuss learning and to help foster a Growth Mindset approach to their work. For example, when a pupil encounters a challenging task rather than think "I can't do this", they may say "I can't do this ... yet" which sets the expectation that with time and effort anything is achievable. As part of this approach pupils are taught to see mistakes as something to learn from rather than be ashamed of and therefore encouraged to take risks in their learning. Pupils are also given opportunities to reflect on their learning; asking questions of themselves such as, "What have I learnt and how did I learn it?", "What have I struggled with and how can I improve this?"





Key Stage 2 have recently introduced a set of specific learning behaviours which build on the EYFS and KS1 learning powers. These are: Zest, Optimism, Self-control, Curiosity, Social intelligence and Resilience.

Forest School

Forest School Learning outside of the classroom is an embedded practice of the school. Woodpecker Forest School is run in the school's woodland areas by teachers and TAs who have Forest School practitioner training at Level 3.

All children have the opportunity to attend a term of Forest School sessions during each year they are at the school. In addition, leaders run additional sessions per week for children who the school have identified would benefit. The school has an outdoor classroom for outdoor learning to take place as well as cross-curricular orienteering provision that can be adapted to suit a variety of year groups and lessons.

- Outdoor learning enables children to consolidate and apply their learning outside of the classroom. In addition to this, it can help to develop the skills of enquiry, critical thinking and reflection, necessary for our children and young people to meet the social, economic and environmental challenges of life in the 21st century.
- Forest school gives children the freedom, time and space to grow in confidence. It is a great opportunity to support the development of the whole child, giving children an opportunity to succeed in different areas and build on the growth mindset values that are woven throughout the school, such as resilience and cooperation, and supporting good mental health.

Curriculum Implementation

Planning

Long Term Planning

Our Progression of Knowledge and Skills documents highlight all of the key knowledge and skills that we aim for children to achieve within each year group at St James'. This is planned to ensure there is progression and children are able to build upon their previous learning whilst also ensuring key concepts are returned to throughout their education. These key concepts allow children to develop a secure knowledge of how to apply their skills within a subject and enable them to become critical and creative learners as they progress through to Year 6.

In some subjects we use set schemes such as Charanga for Music and CORAM SCARF for PSHE. Where we have opted to use schemes, we have ensure there is clear reasoning behind this decision and how we think the scheme is the most suitable for the children at St James'.

Each year group have their own specific topics to follow throughout the year – one for each long term. These have been set to ensure all of the knowledge and skills can be covered through a variety of different opportunities and contexts, whilst also ensuring children return to, and develop their understanding of concepts. Elements of these topics can be adjusted based on the needs of the cohort, such as the Stunning Start, Marvellous Middle and Fantastic Finish, but they are designed and structured to ensure learning is secure and embedded.

Medium Term Planning





Each year group then breaks this learning into weekly sessions for each subject, plotting the Learning Objective or Key Question for each session. Teachers use the subject progression documents to ensure coverage and progression for their year group at this stage in the planning. Where possible, connections are made between subjects to allow for cross-curricular and real-life learning.

Short Term Planning

Weekly plans are created as a year group and used to specify how specific objectives will be taught. They identify the key activities and resources required – both physical and electronic. Teachers also consider how objectives can be adapted and differentiated for different needs and abilities within the class. This weekly plan is not intended as a teaching script and there is no expectation that teachers create individual lesson plans.

EYFS

Within the EYFS, the topic is used as a foundation for planning with opportunities for children to also engage in their own self-initiated activities. Key skills are identified through the progression documents and these are planned for within the coverage of the topic and through the provision of resources within the learning environment. Skills may be directly taught and modelled but are then embedded within the provision, allowing children to apply them within their activities.

We encourage flexibility within our planning to allow for children's own interests to be reflected within their learning environment. Weekly plans are generated across the year group to ensure consistency in the provision, however skills may be developed differently across the classes based on the interests of the children and the choices made through child-initiated learning. Staff follow the observation, assessment, planning cycle to ensure learning opportunities are accessible and challenging for all.

Monitoring

In order to maintain high standards of teaching, learning and the curriculum, Phase Leaders, Subject Leaders and Senior Leaders engage in regular monitoring exercises across the school. They use book looks, pupil voice, learning environment checks and drop in observations to inform their understanding of current provision and to identify next steps for continued improvement. Feedback is given to staff about strengths and areas for development.

Assessment

EYFS

Within the EYFS, learning is continuously assessed to inform future planning. Staff observe children's interactions and activities and these are recorded in individual Learning Journals where progress is made. Within the first 6 weeks of school, children complete the Reception Baseline Assessment. Development Matters 2021 is then used to inform Reception assessments and termly tracking and staff assess progress across all 17 areas of learning. Transfer documents from Pre-Schools and information from Parents also contribute to these assessments. Tracking is completed at three points throughout the year to help inform planning and provision.

KS1&2





We have three Assessment Weeks throughout the Year. During these weeks, children across the school complete Maths, GPS and Reading Assessments from Rising Stars alongside a school-wide writing task. These are used to support teacher assessment and to ensure consistency across year groups. Teachers submit key data following each of these Assessment Weeks using Insight Tracking. This informs future provision as well as identifying children who may benefit from additional support groups.

At present we are moving towards termly assessment for Foundation Subjects in Key Stages 1 and 2. This will be relevant to the pedagogical approaches of the subject. In some, it may reflect how a pupil has engaged with the Learning Objectives whilst in others it may involve a recall activity. We are then aiming to highlight children who may need additional consolidation of learning before moving forwards.

Within daily teaching, RAP ('Reflect and perfect') is a strategy used at the start of lessons from Year 2 to revisit prior learning and is a core part of the school's marking and assessment policy. This is based on the research around cognition and the need to consolidate learning in order to transfer it from short term to long term memory. Alongside this, staff focus on providing timely and relevant feedback rather than spending a long time writing comprehensive feedback on each piece of learning. Children are encouraged, and supported, to edit, correct and extend their learning themselves, developing their independence.

Roles and responsibilities

Learning and teaching is a shared responsibility and all members of the school community have an important part to play. All members of the school community should work towards the school's aims by:

- cherishing children as individuals and respecting their rights, values and beliefs;
- fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community;
- providing a well-structured environment in which all are fully aware of behavioural expectations;
- offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life and recognising the importance of different cultures;
- encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviours and the process of learning;
- working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another.

Teachers will endeavour to:

- provide a challenging and stimulating curriculum designed to encourage all children to reach the highest standard of achievement;
- recognise and be aware of the needs of each individual child;
- be good role models, reflecting the British values and our Christian ethos;
- keep up-to-date with educational issues and have a positive attitude to change and develop their own expertise;
- provide clear information on school procedures and pupil progress;
- give positive and constructive feedback that moves pupils learning along;





take responsibility for the teaching and learning in their class and deliver quality first teaching;

Subject leaders have a variety of roles. These include:

- taking the lead in producing a progression of skills document, to ensure progression and continuity in their subject throughout the school;
- being organised and prepared when planning whole school topics, leading other staff when considering their subject;
- supporting colleagues in their development and implementation of the scheme of work, and in assessment and record-keeping activities;
- monitoring their subjects and advising the Headteacher on action needed as well as feeding back successes and development points to staff;
- taking responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for their subjects;
- keeping up-to-date through reading and CPD.

Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning by:

- ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, well-rested and in good health;
- ensuring that their child arrives at school wearing the correct uniform and bringing necessary equipment;
- providing support for the discipline within the school and for the teacher's role;
- supporting the work of educational targets and becoming actively involved in the implementation of any support programme;
- participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainment;
- supporting their child with home learning;
- ensuring early contact with school to discuss matters which affect a child's happiness, progress and behaviour;
- ensuring that all contact addresses and telephone numbers are up to date and correct;
- encouraging their child to become increasingly independent as they progress throughout the school;
- informing the school of reasons for their child's absence;

Pupils are encouraged to support the school's aims by:

- coming to school regularly and on time;
- being organised by bringing their book bag, reading books and other resources;
- behaving well in school, on the playground and on the way to and from school;
- taking increased responsibility for their own learning by using their learning powers;
- taking increased responsibility to be independent where possible.

Governors are encouraged to support the school by:

- recognising and celebrating success;
- developing positive and worthwhile relationships with the staff;
- getting to know the children;
- recognising different teaching styles;
- understanding the environment in which teachers teach;
- monitoring policies;
- finding out what resources are needed and prioritising these;





- supporting and challenging Senior Leaders and Subject Leaders;
- appointing, and being responsible for the appraisal of the Head Teacher

