

St Michael at Bowes CE Junior School

Teaching and Learning Policy



“An inclusive Christian community, built on firm foundations for successful lives”

This Teaching & Learning Policy strongly underpins all other school policies. At St Michael at Bowes School we recognise that education involves children, parents, carers, staff, governors, the community and the local authority, and that for optimum benefit, all should work closely together to support the process of learning.

The aim of St Michael at Bowes School is to guide and support our pupils to live out our vision, embody our core values and as a result become high achieving and successful learners, who contribute positively to the world. St Michael at Bowes is a Rights Respecting School. The principles and articles of the UNCRC are embedded in this policy as are the principles of Growth Mindset theory.

Our core values are:

- Caring
- Cooperation
- Fairness
- Honesty
- Resilience
- Respect

The aim of this policy is to set out the ways in which teaching at the school will enable our pupils to get the best from their education and become learners for life.

To enable these aims to be met we need

An Effective School Learning Environment, where:

- The physical environment of the classrooms and other areas provide a comfortable temperature with adequate ventilation and lighting;
- Children have access to drinking water and are well nourished;
- Classrooms and other areas are carefully effectively planned and managed;
- Resources are organised in order that pupils can make choices whilst learning;
- Displays, both in and out of the classroom, stimulate, enhance, assist and celebrate teaching and learning;
- Our whole school, including the external environment, is seen as a place for learning and is resourced and treated as such;
- Our policies and teaching strategies support pupils taking part in decisions relating to school resources (this is done on an individual, class and RRS Council level);
- The whole ethos of our school demonstrates our commitment to high standards of achievement and progress;
- There is a positive assertive approach to pupils' behaviour;
- Our pupils understand that adults who work with them should be treated with equal respect;
- Our community understands that learning is a process and making mistakes is a vital part of that journey;
- The adults, as the duty bearers in the school, understand how to use the language of rights to encourage our pupils to be active, respectful and cooperative learners.

Teachers build positive relationships and create an environment in which all students feel they belong and feel safe. The school environment allows all students to thrive as individuals and as learners. Teachers establish appropriate learning focused relationships where expectations are set high and where all children are familiar with roles, routines and boundaries. Appropriate behaviour is the expectation and is insisted upon at all times. Our pupils are taught to be polite and to display good manners. They are also taught to have respect for their school, its wider community and the people around them.

Self-confidence and self-esteem are important. Praise is given for politeness and for good or improved behaviour. Good relationships are essential in establishing this ethos, which aims to promote high self-esteem in all pupils.

Our understanding of how pupils learn

We believe our pupils learn in various ways and are SMART in different ways.

It is therefore important that pupils are offered a range of learning opportunities, which allow them to work in ways that allow them to display their strengths and develop their skills.

These could include:

- Investigation and problem solving
- Research
- Whole-class work
- Group work (in groups selected for different reasons)
- Paired work
- Individual work
- Independent work, which is child directed
- Collaborative work
- Selecting and using relevant resources to support learning
- Asking and answering questions
- Use of IT including visual images, film, interactive teaching resources etc
- Fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest
- Guest visitors and performances
- Creative activities
- Debates, discussions, oral presentations and other speaking and listening strategies
- Drama techniques
- Designing and making things
- Participation in athletic or physical activity
- Setting challenges for themselves

Children are taught to take responsibility for their own learning; to review the way they learn and to overcome challenges in their learning by having a growth mindset and challenging negative feelings they may have about their work.

Our understanding of effective teaching

We believe that effective teaching is taking place when:

- Children are enjoying the learning experience;
- Learning is at the heart of all high quality teaching;

- The teacher has good subject knowledge and models good learning;
- The teacher plans, explains & delivers clear learning objectives and where appropriate, a focused success criteria;
- The teacher uses methods/organisation which enable all pupils to learn effectively (including target setting);
- The teacher challenges and inspires pupils so they develop a “can do” attitude;
- The teacher has a clear understanding of the progression of skills in all subject areas;
- The teacher uses time and resources (which include support staff) effectively to maximise learning;
- The teacher uses formative and summative assessments to help pupils learn;
- The teacher understands how to achieve an effective classroom climate to raise achievement and learning;
- Learning promotes equal opportunities regardless of gender, race & ability;
- The children are able to show independence, creativity and resilience;
- Pupils’ work is marked regularly against shared learning objectives;
- Children have a clear understanding of the next steps in their learning.

The Curriculum

We have constructed a rigorous knowledge-rich curriculum which provides teachers with a useful lens through which to plan lessons. Teachers are deliberate in their planning of what students will learn in order to support them constructing rich, extensive schema for a range of knowledge domains. In order to secure the best outcomes, teachers will ensure that new knowledge is connected to what they already know and will prepare them for the next steps in their learning. Topics are designed around a logical set of ideas and that build on each other or follow a sequence. We understand the experiences of our pupils and aim to provide a curriculum that enhances pupils’ cultural capital and endeavours to overcome any barriers that they may face.

Our objectives are to:

- Plan, teach, assess, deliver & monitor a curriculum that reflects the expectations of the National curriculum as an entitlement for all children regardless of age, gender & race;
- Enable all pupils to work in an environment that is exciting, stimulating and challenging in order for them to develop into independent learners.;
- Provide the children with a wide range of opportunities, resources and teaching styles to promote knowledge, skills and understanding;
- Actively promote the principle that all pupils should be encouraged to become independent learners. They will be taught to collect and use information from a wide variety of sources and make sensible choices in all aspects of their learning;
- Make our curriculum broad (including before and after school opportunities), so that children are given a wide view of the world about them;
- Make it balanced, so that they are offered appropriate amounts of time depending on the importance of the subjects they are studying;
- Make it coherent, so that the children can make connections between subjects, where they overlap and interconnect;
- Make it differentiated, so that children of different abilities are taught areas of the curriculum at their level, and are not prevented from making progress;
- Give continuity and progression, so that children move smoothly from one stage to the next, at their pace and level of understanding;

Our understanding of the development of teachers

At St Michael at Bowes, we are committed to making sure every teacher is a good or outstanding teacher. In order to achieve this, staff will be supported to effectively deliver ambitious, high quality teaching and learning which follows a distinctive and consistent approach within the school. All developments in our teaching and learning practice are supported by sound educational research and key ideas from influential educational thinkers and researchers. Strategies are embedded in planning and are regularly trialled and reviewed for impact through a process of collaboration with staff through instructional coaching. This ensures all teaching staff are involved and take responsibility for the continued improvement and evolution of teaching and learning in our school. In addition to this, each teacher then has a personal development plan put in place to help them to improve and maintain their practice at a high level. This plan may include:

- Coaching;
- Partnering for performance;
- Focused lesson observation;
- Team teaching;
- Demo teaching;
- Opportunities to observe teaching in other classes and, where practical, other schools;
- Work with an external agency;
- Joint lesson planning;
- Joint marking;
- Courses and accreditation

(Ref: Staff Development Policy)

Inclusion

Our school is inclusive and we ensure all pupils feel included in all our activities. Teaching strategies from The Walkthrus such as Cold Calling; Think, Pair, Share and Show me boards allow all children to feel secure in their learning and involved in lessons. We recognise the entitlement of all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum. Systems are in place for early identification of barriers to children's learning and participation so that learners can engage in school activities with all other pupils. We acknowledge the need for high expectations and challenging targets for all children.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Our school is committed to improving the quality of teaching whenever it can, so it is essential that teaching and learning are evaluated. The necessary action following this monitoring then informs the School Improvement Plan and the Staff Development Plans. Pupils' work is sampled, monitored and moderated regularly in all curriculum areas by the subject leaders and members of Core SLT. A half-termly review of monitoring procedures is held with all members of the teaching staff in the form of Pupil Progress Meetings and Contextual Meetings, which include discussions around whole class teaching strategies, barriers to learning and the impact of in-class interventions that are used. Subject leaders will regularly monitor children's books. The senior leadership team conduct regular, informal drop-ins, which inform next steps in teacher development.

Reviewed: September 2025

Review: As required