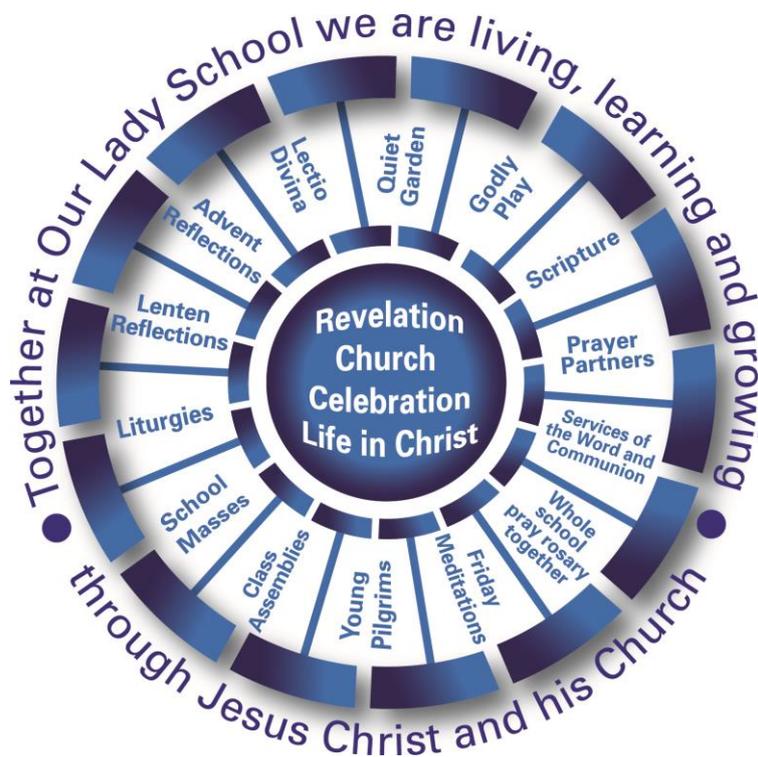




Our Lady Catholic Primary School

Teaching and Learning Policy



The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust
A Catholic Academy

March 2021

The Catholic faith underpins all areas of the teaching and learning at Our Lady Catholic Primary School and our mission statement (below) permeates all aspects of school life. We aim to encourage our children to become problem-solving, independent decision makers with inquisitive minds, fostering a desire to find out more. The policy below should be read in conjunction with our Curriculum Design document and Remote Learning Offer.

Mission Statement

Together at Our Lady School we are living, learning and growing through Jesus Christ and his Church

Aims

- To promote high quality teaching to ensure all learners are included, motivated and engaged
- To raise standards by ensuring consistency and continuity of teaching, learning and challenge
- To promote high quality learning experiences that focus on the development of understanding
- To ensure that we inspire in all children a love of learning and the desire to continue to learn, with teachers understanding themselves as learners alongside the children

Principles

These are the principles by which we achieve these aims:

- Creativity is at the heart of teaching and learning
- Learning is made vivid and real
- All are included and success is expected for all
- High standards are set
- Children experience excellence
- Planning is creative and well thought out
- Learning is revisited to increase stickability
- Teaching techniques match learning needs
- Questioning is encouraged, together with a growth mind-set, praising effort and persistence
- Assessment for learning forms daily class life
- Personal qualities are developed across the curriculum
- We are a learning community

Equal Opportunities

In accordance with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, all children will be given full access to the curriculum, unless their Education, Health and Care Plan indicates otherwise. Staff will actively support all children to reach their potential regardless of academic ability, race, gender or age.

Curriculum Arrangements

We meet all statutory arrangements for curriculum time in each phase of the school. We regularly review our curriculum to provide a vibrant, varied and enriching curriculum, ensuring breadth, depth, balance and continuity.

Our Philosophy of Learning

We believe learning is:

- **Active:** we structure each lesson into appropriate 'blocks of time, allowing opportunities for interactive and exploratory learning activities
- **Reflective:** we use open questions to encourage debate and self assessment at the end of lessons against the agreed objectives
- **Progressive:** we practise our skills and learn from our mistakes
- **Co-operative:** shared learning, through group and paired activities, is a regular feature of our lessons, with peer assessment and talk partner systems
- **Stimulating:** we use a range of teaching and learning styles including auditory, kinaesthetic and visual. We challenge children to move on
- **Rewarding:** we motivate through praising and rewarding effort as well as achievement

Above all we believe that learning is not only about the acquisition of knowledge, but also about taking responsibility for your own learning. We seek to develop these skills through a variety of processes.

Key Skills

- Communication
- Working with others
- Problem solving
- Self-evaluation and improvement
- Technology
- Application of learning
- Managing behaviour

Thinking Skills

- Enquiry
- Reasoning
- Creativity
- Information Processing
- Evaluation
- Motivation
- Self awareness
- Empathy
- Social Skills

Lesson Structure

We have a basic lesson structure that all teachers adhere to. However, we recognise that on occasion lessons need to be structured differently to maximise use of resources and/or learning.

The four phase lesson structure:

1. Introduction

- Creating a purposeful atmosphere
- Engaging all children
- Links made to prior knowledge
- Cross- curricular links
- Learning objectives and success criteria shared

2. Direct teaching – Input

- Exposition broken into chunks appropriate to concentration span and is broken up by activities to help develop understanding
- Variety of open and closed questions used to assess progress and understanding
- Vocabulary displayed and used
- Strategies are modelled by both teachers and pupils

3. Learning activities – processing information

- Tasks designed to enable children to develop understanding and to help teachers assess learning. We make references to prior learning to build 'sticky knowledge' or links between learning over time.
- Opportunities provided for children to experiment with concepts, ask questions and learn in their preferred learning style

4. Plenary – consolidating learning

- Reviewing what has been learnt
- Reflecting on how it has been learnt
- Links made to the learning objective and success criteria
- Links made to the next steps for learning

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in our Reception class follow their own curriculum based around 7 areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional aspects of learning
- Literacy
- Communication and language
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Art and Design
- Physical Development

Learning in these years is balanced through adult led activities and child initiated learning. Planning identifies key teaching objectives and follows as much as possible the interests of the children. Assessment of learning is primarily through observation of children engaged in the range of cross-curricular activities, which are both child-initiated and adult-directed.

Meeting the needs of all learners

Lessons are carefully planned to take into account the range of needs within a classroom. We manage these using several strategies.

Differentiation

Within any lesson the teacher will differentiate both the teaching and the learning activities to match the abilities of the children, however, no ceiling is placed on a child's learning, with challenge being provided for all learners, giving the child autonomy to make their own learning decisions.

Teaching and Learning Styles

Over a week, teachers will use a variety of styles in order to enable all children to access the teaching. Key styles used are:

- Visual
- Auditory
- Kinaesthetic

Teachers will also ensure that children have the opportunity to use a variety of learning styles, during

- Individual tasks
- Group tasks
- Peer support
- Whole class work
- Independent tasks

Where children's first language is not English, the school will, as far as is practicable, provide additional support for learning within the classroom.

Children experiencing behavioural difficulties which affect learning will be supported by the Class Teacher, Teaching Assistants and the Inclusion Coordinator, to access teaching.

ISPs

Children on the special needs register and children with Education, Health and Care Plans may have individual support plans specifically tailored to their needs. These are followed as far as possible as part of the normal classroom teaching but sometimes require specific input involving withdrawal from the main classroom environment for short periods of time. Some children may receive personalised resources or activities as deemed appropriate by their class teacher.

Gifted and Talented Children

Children on the Gifted and Talented register have some activities planned specifically to meet their needs within a classroom setting. Opportunities are provided for these children, outside school hours; as part of the extended school provision. We encourage, wherever possible, opportunities to engage with inter school competition such as sports competitions, Yr 5 Math Challenge etc.

Curriculum Planning

Our Lady Catholic Primary School planning is primarily based on the requirements of the National Curriculum, the Primary Strategy with varied opportunities for enrichment across all classes. Planning in the Foundation Stage follows the Early Learning Goals and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

Long Term Planning

Our whole school Curriculum Design booklet plots the content and key skills covered from YR to Y6. It enables us to ensure balance and progression across the school and to identify cross curricular links and opportunities for outdoor learning and educational visits. We use knowledge organisers prior to starting topics to support formative assessment in the foundation subjects. We have developed whole school progression grids per subject so that threads of learning and knowledge are progressive across the school. All of these documents can be easily accessed via the curriculum section of our school website by parents.

Medium & Short Term Planning

For Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Foundation Subjects we use the objectives provided by the National Curriculum and generally we follow Scheme of Work that are available through the Local Authority or National Providers e.g. Herts Essential, Herts Back on Track, Plan Bee. For RE, teachers use the Diocese of Westminster units written by Margaret Carswell. The plans identify learning objectives, key vocabulary, challenging activities and resources for learning, provide guidance on activities to extend gifted and talented pupils, in addition to supporting pupils with SEN and behaviour issues; as well as including support staff activities.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, our medium term plans have been produced by our own staff, using the guidelines contained within the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

Planning is scrutinised by the SLT and Subject Leaders for monitoring purposes on a planned basis according to school improvement priorities each term.

Reflection and Evaluation

Teachers will review their lessons, noting any amendments for the future. Plans will be annotated and amended as necessary. Teachers will evaluate the effectiveness of different styles and approaches. Observations of lessons will take place according to School Development Plan priorities to assist teachers in their professional development and performance management objectives.

Assessment for Learning

Summative Assessment

The school's arrangements for formal assessment throughout the year are outlined in the Assessment Policy. Results from these assessments are used for targeting and tracking purposes to ensure progress and achievement of value added in learning, as well as identifying those pupils who are not on track and agreeing support measures that are needed to be put in place.

Formative Assessment

Assessment opportunities are central to the planning and organisation of each lesson. Key elements of this are ...

- Recap of previous knowledge at the start of lessons
- Adult observation of children's responses to questions
- Adult observation of children's response to tasks
- Use of success criteria against lesson objectives
- Continuous feedback through the process of the lesson
- Self and peer assessment
- Plenary activities
- Marking linked to lesson objectives and giving indicators for improvement of work (refer to Marking Policy and Stick Mark Book maps)
- Use of knowledge organisers

It is an important aspect of our assessment that children are encouraged to be honest in their self assessment. Children indicating they have not understood features of a lesson will be given additional support.

Record Keeping

Records are kept of all summative assessments undertaken and of other assessments throughout the year. Details of these are contained in the Assessment Policy.

Classroom Management and Organisation

The Learning Environment

The learning environment will be managed in a way that supports the learning taking place. Features of this will be

- Furniture will be arranged to facilitate different types of organisation – whole class teaching, group work, one to one and also to facilitate the inclusion of all pupils
- Learning resources in use in the lesson will be clear and visible for all children
- Other resources will be stored and clearly labelled
- Book corners will be comfortable and attractive
- Labels, posters and displays of vocabulary will, as far as is practicable, reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the school population
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage imaginative and role play areas will be changed regularly
- Lessons will begin punctually and will follow the agreed time allocation for each subject
- Interactive and 3D displays will reflect current work and be changed regularly to maintain interest.
- Making use of ICT where appropriate.

Teaching Strategies

We employ a variety of strategies within any one lesson in order to maximise learning for the children. Over any one week we aim for a balance between all of the strategies.

- Discussion – child and teacher led
- Open and closed questioning
- Direct exposition
- Conferencing
- Interactive activities
- Mind mapping
- Reflection
- Modelling
- Repetition / reinforcement activities
- Praise and rewards
- Interventions
- Team work with parents and support staff

The Role of Teaching Assistants

We have a number of support staff who play a central and specialised role in our learning processes. Key elements of their role are:

- To support the teaching – either through direct delivery or by enabling access for identified pupils
- Teach a small group
- Carry out assessments
- Support planning
- Prepare resources
- Supporting children with special educational needs

- Running support groups

Behaviour Management

We believe that excellent standards of behaviour are central to effective learning. Our Behaviour Policy outlines our procedures relating to classroom discipline.

Resources

Each classroom has a basic set of appropriate resources. Specialist resources are stored in designated areas and are maintained and audited by subject leaders and teaching assistants. Subject leaders have a delegated capitation budget each year and are responsible for applying the principles of best value in all spending decisions.

Pupils will be taught how to use resources correctly and safely and also to respect and maintain equipment.

Care will be taken that resources reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the school and that all pupils have equal access to the use of resources.

The Role of Parents/Carers

The school recognises parents/carers as the first educators of their children and will seek to work in partnership with them at all times. Parents/carers will

- Be invited into school for a variety of occasions such as assemblies, plays, shared reading, library, school mass and services
- Encouraged and welcomed to support their child's learning in the classroom
- Encouraged to be involved in additional activities for the children such as after school clubs or extra curricular activities
- Offered appropriate and reasonable access to teachers and teaching assistants to discuss areas of concern
- Be invited to consultations and information meetings to discuss progress of pupils
- Be expected to take an active role in supporting their child's learning through homework
- Be invited on school trips and undertake volunteering in school

Parents/carers are encouraged to support their children's learning through supporting and signing the Home School Agreement.

The Role of Governors

It is the governors' responsibility to monitor the standards of teaching and learning through

- Receiving and responding to Headteacher reports and reports from Subject Leaders
- Questioning and analysing standards data
- Fulfilling the roles agreed with the school for link governors

- Ensuring that all link policies (e.g. Equal Opportunities, Behaviour and Discipline) are in place and implemented
- Visits to school, observing lessons and reporting back to full Governing Body

The Role of the Community

We recognise that learning does not take place in a vacuum and that the local community can make valuable additional contributions to the educational experiences of our children. We therefore seek to involve the community in the life of the school through:

- Using visitors from local businesses and charities to support curriculum projects
- Contributing to special events – e.g. Summer Fayre, discos
- Identifying specialist talent to enrich our curriculum – e.g. Arts and Music

The Role of the Parish Church

The school is recognised as part of the Parish and has strong links with it. The Pastoral Assistant works regularly with the children and staff. Together we are involved in assemblies, masses, visits to the Church (e.g. Stations of the Cross), charitable works, Service of the Word, Education Sunday, preparation for Reconciliation and Early Communion, which emphasise the three aspects of the Personal Acceptance, the Parish Welcome and the Thanksgiving expressed in the mission and service to the parish.

We actively seek to build partnerships with local organisations and the community to enrich learning.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and as required in the light of any national legislation.