



St. Margaret's C of E Primary and Nursery School

Teaching & Learning Policy

Written: September 2023

Date for review: September 2025

Head Teacher's signature

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Chair of governor's
signature

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Ethos Statement

St Margaret's School exists to provide a happy learning environment that will encourage and develop the potential of all who work in it.

Our aim is for each child to progress spiritually, academically, socially and physically within a Christian community and to leave with a love of learning and an awareness of God's love.

Our Aims

- To maximise children's learning potential
- To promote high quality effective teaching
- To recognise and celebrate achievement, attainment and effort
- To foster creativity, enthusiasm, enjoyment, motivation, independence and co-operation
- To stimulate a desire for lifelong learning
- To plan lessons which are purposeful, interactive, engaging and of a good pace
- To reflect on their social, moral, spiritual and cultural experiences

We celebrate and embrace diversity and value all abilities, as every member of our school has different strengths to contribute. By using a wide range of interactive teaching strategies it enables children to learn from each other and foster healthy working relationships. As we learn from talking, everyone needs to develop the ability to articulate their thinking and ask and answer challenging questions (see appendix for examples). Children, therefore, work in various groups organised by:

- Similar ability for learning new concepts and skills that are appropriate to their needs;
- Mixed ability groups for collaborative work and to build confidence;
- Friendship groups for sharing skills and helping each other.

Adults in our school are mutually supportive, working together to improve their own practice and set an example of teamwork. The climate throughout the school and in each classroom should show trust, mutual respect and co-operation.

St Margaret's children are encouraged to take active control of their own learning and build up an increasing degree of independence as they progress through the school. Children begin by developing the ability to take responsibility for belongings and equipment, and are given opportunities to make their own choices or decisions in many different situations. Children are expected to be active listeners, constantly thinking and seeking understanding rather than passively waiting for knowledge to come to them. We aim to make learning vivid and exciting by fostering imagination, creativity, experimentation and risk taking. We work for real purposes whenever possible using information communication technology as a learning tool.

The Teaching and Learning policy is at the heart of what we do – it sets out how we, as a school, achieve the highest standards for all of the children, carrying out a consistent, high quality approach to learning, where no-one is left behind and the potential of all is realised. This policy is rooted in our shared understanding of what the purpose of education is and what makes excellent teaching and learning. It reflects our school's Ethos Statement which underpins all the work of the school.

The purpose of a teaching and learning policy is to ensure that:

- There is a high standard of teaching and learning in all classes
- There is consistency of practice within and between year groups
- There is a shared belief in the way teachers teach and children learn
- Everybody is clear about the roles they fulfil
- There is equality of access and opportunity for all children
- There is a clear understanding of how the school's ethos is evident in practice.

Pedagogy

Teacher expertise lies at the core of the delivery of the planned curriculum and teachers are actively encouraged to develop subject specialisms. This enables strong direct instruction in the classroom, with teachers able to deliver content with clarity, confidence and precision. Direct instruction is interspersed with age-appropriate pupil tasks to enable pupils to practise and consolidate their understanding, before moving swiftly on to new content. This is underpinned through a clear cognitive science research approach where teachers are encouraged to try different methodologies of instruction.

We believe that children learn best when:

- Teachers have high expectations of all children's learning and provide appropriate scaffolds to support all children to achieve.
- Lessons begin with a recap of prior learning. This may be through quizzing, a short writing task or a quick classroom discussion.
- New learning is then presented in an engaging and creative way, in small steps and through carefully planned explanations
- Pupil participation in learning is maximised through a range of strategies: no hands-up, mini whiteboards, effective questioning and lesson delivery that is concise and engaging
- Lessons are shaped according to the needs of the children: sped up or slowed down or levels of support adjusted following in-lesson assessment
- Opportunities to practise new learning are embedded so that new knowledge is internalised and new skills become fluent and automatic
- Practice is guided initially, with levels of support being gradually withdrawn to foster pupil independence

Curriculum

Knowledge helps develop well-rounded, empowered citizens and widens opportunities and life chances. The specifics of what we want children to learn are important that work alongside and intertwined within our Christian values. Skills, vocabulary and conceptual understanding are forms of knowledge. Skills such as critical thinking and problem solving need to be taught within specific subject contexts. Students are empowered through knowing things and acquiring powerful

knowledge. At St Margaret's we want children to develop into well-rounded citizens with a host of strong character traits that will emerge through being immersed in a knowledge-rich curriculum.

We believe that children learn best when:

- Subjects are taught discretely, so that both the knowledge and skills of the subject can be explicitly taught
- Schemes of work are planned in advance and fully resourced so that learning can be carefully sequenced and a variety of learning activities included
- The curriculum provides a clear progression model, supporting the layering of new knowledge on secure foundations and enabling children to build secure schema
- Units of work are supported by knowledge organisers that detail the facts and vocabulary to be learned.
- Units are planned to incorporate learning from cognitive science: spaced retrieval practice, formative low-stakes testing, and strategies to build fluency.
- Explicit vocabulary instruction is included in all subjects. We believe that strong language skills underpin all learning.

During lessons at St Margaret's teachers will choose, based on their professional judgement, a combination of the following to teach effectively:

- Creative, purposeful and contextual lessons
- Clear didactic instruction and teaching that does not require the children to 'guess what's in the teacher's head'. Instead, questions are asked to make every child think, alongside high level, individually targeted questioning
- Pace that enhances learning and maintains positive engagement
- Focused talk between children
- A range of active engagement strategies eg: paired talk, shared working, using communal spaces to allow movement in a range of subjects etc
- Use of high quality concrete and pictorial supports
- Teacher modelling and clarity for learners as to what excellence looks like
- Teachers guide children from teacher modelling, to guided practice, to independent practice, aiming for around 80% success rate.
- Consistently high expectations of behaviour and attitude to learning,
- Verbal feedback from adults and peers
- High quality outcomes that showcase learning
- Sufficient time allowed for children to reflect on and edit their learning and to identify their next steps
- Daily and monthly review of previously taught content

Learning behaviour:

During learning these behaviours will be seen:

- Children are actively engaged in and encouraged to reflect on their own learning. This will be evident in the use of AfL and feedback strategies that develop their metacognitive strategies (see feedback policy for details on what specific feedback is used and when).
- Children and adults demonstrate mutual respect and positivity.
- Children take pride in their work and how it is presented, following the school presentation policy.
- Children are able to talk about what they are learning, where the learning has come from and how they will move forward in the future.

- Children are encouraged by the adults to take risks and develop critical faculties through their increasing understanding of metacognition.
- Mastery of concepts across the curriculum leads to increased confidence and the ability to apply learning independently in different contexts.
- Focused and targeted questioning enables the teacher to individualise learning, maximise progress and leads to the development of critical thinking skills in the children.
- Children assess their own and each other's work, using success criteria and high quality models to give feedback on successes and areas for development. They have the resilience to effectively discuss areas for improvement. They edit in green pen, taking into account feedback given to them by their peers and by the adults with whom they work.
- Children embed their learning and develop their confidence, self-esteem and lifeskills through the diverse range of extra-curricular activities on offer before, during and after school.

Formative assessment

The purpose of feedback and assessment is threefold: to inform the teacher of a child's attainment and therefore to inform future planning; to inform a child of how well they have done and what they need to do next; to motivate a child through celebrating success Principles:

- There is a consistent and manageable method of feedback, assessment and pupil response throughout the school.
- Work is assessed promptly and feedback given as close as possible to the time of the work being completed, including within the lesson.
- Assessment within the lesson is used to shape the course of the learning and inform levels of support
- All adults working with the children are involved in giving feedback.
- Children are given opportunities to respond to feedback and to make improvements to their work. Clear strategies for improvement are given.
- Feedback and assessment are used to inform future planning and target setting
- Giving children opportunities to assess their own and each other's work builds children's metacognitive skills.

Teaching and learning is monitored by the Leadership Team, appraisers and subject co-ordinators during formal lesson observations, learning walks and regular book scrutinies (involving all teachers for literacy and maths) as well as thorough careful analysis of data to track groups and individuals.