Teaching and Learning Policy

Approved by:	**Curriculum Committee**
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Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for teaching and learning at St Leonard's Primary School. It is the method through which we offer a rigorous knowledge-led curriculum and its implementation is the responsibility of all the members of the school community. The aim of this document is to help the teachers in the school become the most effective practitioners they can be by using principles established from research, cognitive science and experience. The impact of quality teaching and learning is the progress pupils make and the outcomes they achieve.

Through the St Leonard's Way we:

1. Engage, Challenge and Inspire every child to be the best that they can be
2. Provide an ambitious curriculum which motivates and engages every child
3. Achieve deep understanding, by helping children connect new knowledge with existing knowledge so they are fluent and unconsciously competent at applying their knowledge as skills
4. Deliver academic excellence
5. Secure knowledge into long-term memory
6. Develop secure schemas with connected networks of ideas
7. Equip children with knowledge and cultural capital that they need to prepare them for Life in all its Fullness
8. Enable children to become confident and curious learners, actively engaged in their own learning
9. Develop children's self-respect and respect for the cultures and values of others
10. Develop a Growth Mindset so that children embrace challenge
11. Develop our Learning Powers: Be proud, Enjoy learning, Keep Improving, Try a challenge, Keep flearning, Concentrate, Be co-operative, Don't give up, Use your imagination, Be curious, Have a go

Strategies for Teaching and Learning

We advocate research-based principles of instruction that are 'faithfully' adopted and 'intelligently' adapted from research in cognitive science, research on master teachers and research on cognitive supports. The sources of these principles are referenced and found in the bibliography. We encourage all teachers to read these to develop their knowledge and understanding of the art of teaching.

Teaching at St Leonard's Primary School should be guided by these principles.

Barak Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction

1. Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning (Reactivation)

2. Present new material in small steps with pupil practice after each step: Only present small amounts of new material at any one time and then assist pupils as they practise this material.

3. Ask carefully constructed questions and check the responses of ALL pupils: Questions help pupils practise new information and connect new material to their prior learning.

4. Provide models: providing pupils with models and worked examples can help them learn to solve problems faster.

5. Guide pupil practice: Successful teachers spend more time guiding pupils' practice of new material

6. Check for pupil understanding: Checking for pupil understanding at each point can help pupils learn the material with fewer errors.

7. Obtain a high success rate: It is important for pupils to achieve a high success rate during classroom instruction.

8. Provide scaffolds: The teacher provides pupils with temporary supports and scaffolds to assist them.

9. Require and monitor independent practice: Pupils need extensive, successful practice in order for skills and knowledge to become automatic and embedded in long-term memory.

10. Engage pupils in weekly and monthly review: Pupils need to be involved in extensive practice in order to develop well-connected automatic knowledge

Classroom Talk and Questioning

The central mechanism in effective classroom talk is good use of questioning. Teachers as St Leonard's teachers ask a large number of questions and both closed and open questions play an important role.

At St Leonard's we consider effective questioning to be an essential teaching skill that enables the educator to check pupils' understanding, broaden and deepen the topic under discussion, and model clear thinking skills, and speaking and listening skills.

Working Memory and Cognitive Load Theory

Dylan William has described cognitive load theory as 'the single most important thing for teachers to know'. The human brain can only process a small amount of new information at once, but it can process very large amounts of stored information. Information is processed in the working memory, where small amounts of information are stored for a very short time. The average person can only hold about four 'chunks' of information in their working memory at one time. We help pupils to process, store and retrieve information effectively by:

1. Tailoring lessons according to pupils' existing knowledge and skill and use worked examples.
2. Gradually increase independent problem-solving as pupils become more proficient.
3. Cutting out inessential information.
4. Simplify complex information by presenting it both orally and visually.

Differentiation

Differentiation applies to the level of support and scaffolding learners need to reach common, aspirational goals. Not all learners learn things at the same-rate – some will need more help, more time or more guidance. In practical terms, differentiation involves setting the same learning objectives and planning different ways to support pupils to get there.

Differentiation at St. Leonard's can involve:

1. Setting common high-challenge learning objectives which are defined in detail, with success criteria. Differentiation involves teachers sharing learning objectives and success criteria with children so that they can:
    - assume greater responsibility for their own learning
    - measure their own success and achievement
    - identify more clearly their own learning needs
    - assist the teacher in meeting those needs
    - identify areas for improvement
2. Scaffolding planned with guided practice leading to independent practice. Scaffolding can of course be removed – it is a temporary support. Scaffolding could be in the form of distinct tasks or writing scaffolds for some pupils.
3. Providing appropriate help, possibly with different but carefully selected resources.
4. Providing distinct tasks.

5. Embedded tiering/split inputs: this supports the organisation of a class where pupils progress at different rates, allowing everyone to find a suitable challenge level (seeking an optimal 80% success rate)
6. Different modes of questioning and feedback, tailored to push pupils forward from wherever they are.

Planning

We have high expectations of our children and aspirations for their future. When planning, teachers consider prior assessment and use this diagnostically to identify strengths in learning and to identify gaps which need addressing.

Good planning and use of assessment is essential to effective Learning and Teaching. The school plans in different stages:

a. **Long term** plans based upon the National Curriculum and Early Years Framework.
b. **Medium Term** plans which show objectives for every subject for the year. Knowledge organisers are used to outline the key knowledge that pupils should be taught to recall in topics.
c. **Short Term** plans are the final part of the cycle. Teachers plan weekly to provide specific learning objectives and outcomes for each session. Assessment opportunities are planned for and provide the formative evidence for future planning.
d. **Experiences, trips and visits** are planned to enrich the curriculum and to provide real-life contextual learning opportunities.

When planning work for children with special educational needs and disabilities we use the information and targets set out in the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). We may pre-teach in order to prepare children for new vocabulary, knowledge or skills.

Evaluation and Assessment

At St Leonard's, assessment is for and with pupils rather than 'done to' pupils. Good assessment and evaluation improves the quality of teaching and learning and as such is integral to the whole process. In conjunction with this policy please also read the **Marking and Feedback Policy** and the **Assessment for Learning Policy**. The school particularly values assessment as an on-going process and uses Assessment for Learning strategies. Assessment for Learning includes:

- Learning objectives and success criteria explained to pupils.
- Staff to encourage pupils to self-assess and peer assess their work against the LO.
- Edit and improve lessons in English to have a greater focus of exchanging outstanding work amongst pupils.
- Questioning to check for understanding
- Use of the plenary which should refer clearly to the learning objective. It should be an opportunity to reflect upon what has been learned and to revisit teaching points.

Effective Working with Teaching Assistants

We follow recommendations set out in the MITA programme "Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants"

Teaching Assistants are in school at 8.30 to ensure they have essential liaison time with the class teacher before the children arrive. Teaching Assistants are informed of the specific needs of the pupils, of the weekly and daily plans and intended learning outcomes. It is essential that TAs are fully prepared for their role in the classroom including what they need to feedback to teachers.

Knowledge Organisers

Knowledge organisers capture the key information, terminology, and dates or quotes for a topic. The information on the knowledge organiser is the minimum that needs to be known, rehearsed and stored over time in the long-term memory, in order for pupils to become fluent in the material. Other technical vocabulary and facts will be encountered and learnt through the topic.

Pupils benefit from knowing up front that the knowledge organiser contains the essential information they need to know in order to succeed. Pupils are not expected to know the content from the start, but incrementally over time. This is done by setting some information to be learnt through retrieval practice and revisiting in class, as well as low stakes testing or quizzing.