

# St. Alban & St. Stephen Catholic Primary School & Nursery



*'Learning and growing with God by our side.'*

## Teaching & Learning Policy

Approved by: Governing Board

Date: May 2025

Next review due  
by: May 2027

## 1. Introduction

At St Alban & St Stephen Catholic Primary School & Nursery, we are committed to nurturing and developing the whole child. Rooted in our Catholic ethos, this Teaching and Learning Policy outlines our shared approach to delivering an education which supports our vision and values, ensuring that all pupils achieve their God-given potential - spiritually, academically, socially and emotionally. We want to engage and motivate every pupil through lessons and activities which are joyful, purposeful and rooted in high expectations, inspiring a life-long love of learning.

Our Mission Statement, '**Learning and growing with God by our side**' is interwoven through every aspect of school life, along with the active 'living out' of our five school values of **Faith, Friendship, Determination, Respect and Unity**.

Our practice is informed by educational research and evidence-based pedagogy, including Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction, which support consistency and excellence in teaching across our school.

## 2. Aims

- To provide a nurturing and inclusive environment that reflects our Catholic ethos and is rooted in our **faith**.
- To develop each child's unique talents and abilities, enabling them to experience success whatever their starting points.
- To promote high standards of academic achievement and personal development by delivering an ambitious, knowledge-rich curriculum accessible to all learners.
- To encourage independent, critical thinking and creativity.
- To teach resilience, inspiring each child with the **determination** to persevere and the courage to challenge themselves.
- To develop collaborative learning skills, showing **friendship** and **unity** of purpose when working together to achieve a goal.
- To celebrate diversity and encourage **respect** for all people as children of God.
- To equip all children with the skills, knowledge and confidence to navigate life's challenges as they continue on their journey from St Alban & St Stephen Catholic Primary School & Nursery.
- To foster a culture of self-reflection, and continuous learning amongst pupils and staff.

## 3. Curriculum

The curriculum at St Alban & St Stephen is rich, broad and balanced, designed to meet the needs of all pupils. It is underpinned by our Catholic values and follows the National Curriculum. Learning is enriched by additional opportunities such as trips, homework and extra-curricular clubs. The curriculum is relevant to our school, reflecting the rich historical and geographical context of our locality of St Albans, and mirroring our diverse school community.

Our curriculum is designed to help children know more and remember more. It builds knowledge in a well-sequenced and progressive way. The basic 'building blocks' of learning in each subject are introduced and then these foundations are gradually built on by introducing new knowledge and skills. We also envision the curriculum as a 'spiral curriculum', where knowledge and skills are continually revisited in different contexts and at different stages. Learning is connected across subjects and to real-life contexts.

### Key Components:

- Religious Education is our key core subject in all year groups and is taught in line with Diocesan guidance, enabling children to grow in faith and understanding. 10% of curriculum time is devoted to teaching R.E.. This is in addition to time spent in collective worship and prayer.
- Extra-curricular activities including sporting, cultural and wellbeing clubs.

## EYFS

- Prime Areas of Learning and Development: Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Specific Areas of Learning and Development: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design

## Key Stages 1 and 2

- Core subjects: English, Mathematics, Science, Computing
- Foundation subjects: History, Geography, Art, Design Technology, Music, Physical Education
- Personal, Social, Health and Emotional (PSHE) education including Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RHSE)

## 4. Teaching and Learning Principles used at SSAS

- **High Expectations:** We set challenging yet achievable goals for all pupils, whatever their starting points.
- **Achievement for All:** We expect every child to reach their full potential. We work to identify and remove the barriers to learning for all learners.
- **Inclusivity:** We ensure all teaching practices are accessible and equitable, catering to diverse learning needs and providing support and challenge where needed.
- **Active Learning for Every Pupil:** We engage and motivate all pupils through hands-on activities, collaborative work, and problem-solving tasks.
- **Oracy:** We teach pupils to express themselves clearly and confidently, listen actively, and engage in respectful dialogue across the curriculum.
- **Assessment for Learning:** We use ongoing formative and summative assessments to inform teaching and provide constructive, timely feedback to support pupil progress.
- **Reflective Practice:** We encourage teachers to reflect on their practice to make improvements, fostering continuous improvement and professional dialogue and development.
- **Evidence-based:** We use research-based strategies including Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction and the EEF Report 'Improving Teaching and Learning' to continuously develop effective teaching and learning, drawing on cognitive science, classroom studies, and the practices of expert teachers.
- **Collaborative Working:** We draw on the special expertise and support of staff members working across the school including our Pastoral Mentor, Music Specialist, Sports Teacher, and French Teacher as well as subject leaders and the SENDCo. We also work closely with external professionals and volunteers to enrich learning, including our Environmental Tutor and parent volunteers.










## 5. Teaching Strategies in SSAS Lessons

The following strategies are included in most lessons at SSAS or wherever appropriate:

- **Clear Learning Objective:** A clear learning intention is stated at the start of the lesson in child-friendly language. "Today we are learning... (objective) We are learning this because it will help you to...(purpose) (prior learning and progression)"
- **Hook Activity or Lesson: Begin** lessons and most units of work with a purposeful and memorable, 'attention-grabbing' hook activity or lesson to engage the children eg visual, visual aid or artefact, drama, discussion point, short video clip, photograph or image.
- **I do, We do, You do:** Move in each lesson from teacher modelling to supported, collaborative learning, to independent practice. This is a gradual 'release of responsibility' from the teacher to the pupil.
- **Active Learning strategies:** Use interactive and participatory activities to prevent passive learners who coast through a lesson. Avoid long periods of teacher talk. Intersperse teacher instruction and class discussion with practical activities. Provide opportunities to move wherever possible eg a 'gallery walk'

to different parts of the classroom; stand up/sit down to vote on an answer; use actions to remember key words or to vote; include movement breaks linked to the learning eg BBC supermovers; move from table to table for different activities.

- **Oracy:** Provide opportunities in every lesson to develop speaking and listening skills which will build confidence, and lay the foundation for effective communication, critical thinking, and social interaction. Use learning partner discussion or group discussion. Provide speaking frames to structure responses. Frequently plan drama techniques: hot-seating; partner interviews in role; frozen pictures; conscience alley; role on the wall; facial expressions. Give opportunities for debate and discussion using ABC model: 'I **agree** with...because...', 'I want to **build** on what...said by adding...', 'I want to **challenge** what ... said because...'
- **Outdoor Learning:** Identify opportunities to use the world outside the classroom both as a powerful teaching tool and rich learning environment.

<b>Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction</b>	
<b>Reviewing Material</b>	
	<b>Daily Review:</b> Begin each lesson with a low-stakes review of previous learning to strengthen retention and build fluency, including a review of key vocabulary.
	<b>Weekly and Monthly Review:</b> Regularly revisit key concepts to enhance retention and understanding over time. Refer to prior learning- 'Today's learning is similar to / builds on/ links to what you learnt...' Knowledge Organisers are stuck in books at the start of each unit in R.E., Science, History and Geography. Teachers refer to these in each lesson of the unit.
<b>Questioning</b>	
	<b>Ask Questions:</b> Use a variety of questioning techniques to engage students and check for understanding. Check the understanding of all pupils. Encourage pupils to explain their answers in more depth with probing follow-up questions.
	<b>Check for Understanding:</b> Continuously assess comprehension through formative assessments and adjust teaching accordingly. Use the visualiser in mid-lesson pit-stops to model and share pupils' work. Limit 'hands-up' responses in lessons. Instead, use whole-class responses: small whiteboards with '1,2,3 share'; Think, Pair, Share then use of lolly stick or randomiser to pick a pair of children to answer; thumbs up/ in the middle/down; number of fingers to show responses.
<b>Sequencing Concepts and Modelling</b>	
	<b>Present New Material in Small Steps:</b> Break down complex information into manageable chunks to avoid cognitive overload.
	<b>Provide Models:</b> Model every task (except for assessments and final independent assessment pieces) at the start of the learning sequence. Model the desired skill, process or behaviour to the pupils on the flipchart, whiteboard or under the visualiser, giving pupils a step-by-step demonstration. During this process, simultaneously describe what is being done and why it is being done. Alternatively, deconstruct expert examples (WAGOLLS- What a Good One Looks Like) and use worked examples, starting with the finished product and unpicking why it is effective. Comparing a good and bad example and discussing can also be helpful. Plan Maths and English models and WAGOLLS in advance.
	<b>Scaffolding:</b> Provide temporary supports that are gradually removed as pupils gain independence. Make scaffolds available to all children who need them eg word-banks on tables; manipulatives; speaking frames; writing frames; adult support. Use checklists or success criteria.
<b>Stages of Practice</b>	
	<b>Guided Practice:</b> Support pupils through practice activities, gradually reducing assistance as competence increases.
	<b>Obtain a High Success Rate:</b> Aim for a high level of success in practice activities to build confidence and competence.



**Independent Practice:** Allow time for pupils to consolidate their learning through independent practice.

## 6. Learning Partnerships and Grouping

We value collaborative learning and understand that children learn best when they are actively engaged with their peers and feel confident that they can achieve. In all classes, children work mainly in mixed attainment learning partners. This approach fosters peer support, builds confidence and ensures all children contribute meaningfully to the learning process.

- Partnerships are reviewed and rotated at least fortnightly.
- Children are explicitly taught how to be effective partners – including listening, questioning, and encouraging each other, showing our school values of friendship, respect and unity.
- Collaborative tasks are designed to promote dialogue, reasoning, and shared responsibility.
- Children are referred to as ‘higher attainers’ , ‘lower attainers’ etc, not ‘high ability’ or ‘low ability’. This reflects our belief that ‘ability’ is not fixed and progress is always possible with a growth mindset.
- Children are not grouped in lessons by their attainment, except in guided reading practice groups, phonics catch-up groups, Year 6 SATS booster groups and Year 6 Maths in the Spring Term.
- Adults may call certain children to work with them on a separate table in some lessons, depending on their needs for support in that particular lesson.

## 7. Scaffolding and Support

Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. We believe all children, regardless of background, or need, can thrive with the right support. Every teacher in our school is a teacher of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). To support the needs of all learners, all staff will:

- Provide opportunities for collaborative learning to encourage teamwork and communication.
- Plan carefully and tailor instruction to meet the diverse needs of all learners, including those with SEND and EAL.
- Scaffold tasks. Often, scaffolding will restrict the amount of choices a pupil has to make, enabling them to focus on learning the specific skills or knowledge required. Provide visual, verbal or physical supports where needed. This may include pre-teaching material before the lesson to some learners.
- Use a variety of assessment strategies to identify gaps and adjust teaching accordingly.
- Collaborate with the SENDCo to implement targeted interventions where necessary.
- Work closely with parents, external agencies, and specialists whenever appropriate.
- Monitor the impact of any interventions, track progress and adjust support as needed.

## 8. Learning Environment

Our classrooms are calm, welcoming, and focused environments where children feel safe to take risks in their learning. Displays celebrate pupils’ work, showcase the curriculum, reflect the diversity of the children in the class and reinforce key learning. Learning spaces are organised and resourced to promote independence and engagement. Resources are labelled in an age-appropriate way. The environment is vocabulary-rich with relevant vocabulary displayed. Essential equipment used in almost every lesson:

- Small whiteboards- one whiteboard and two pens between learning partners.
- Visualiser for modelling.
- Paper flipchart for modelling.
- Working walls (for English and Maths) are referred to in each lesson.

## 9. Assessment

Teachers use a range of ongoing assessment techniques to inform planning, identify need, and ensure equitable outcomes for all:

- **Formative Assessment:** Regular checks for understanding through questioning, observation, and discussion.
- **Live Feedback:** In-the-moment support that addresses misconceptions and promotes progress.
- **Summative Assessment:** Periodic tests or tasks to assess long-term understanding and track progress.
- **Verbal and Written Feedback:** Clear, specific feedback that helps children understand their next steps. The marking policy outlines frequency of written marking and alternative ways of providing feedback. Detailed teacher focus marking takes place weekly (English- an extended piece of writing) or once in each half-termly unit for other subjects.

Teachers also ensure effective and thorough assessment for learning through the following:

- Plan a 'Big Question' assessment piece at the end of each unit in History, Geography and R.E..
- Check pupils' progress against learning objectives outlined in Knowledge Organisers for each unit in History, Geography, Science and Religious Education.
- Update Learning Journeys in the front of pupils' writing books and sketchbooks termly to reflect pupil progress and allow pupils to identify their next steps.
- Involve pupils in self-assessment to encourage ownership of learning.
- Use regular termly summative assessments to track pupil progress in reading; phonics (EYFS and KS1); grammar, punctuation and spelling (KS2) and maths.
- Use data to inform planning and address gaps in learning.
- Attend termly pupil progress meetings to review pupil performance.

## 10. Monitoring

Senior leaders, subject leads and teachers work together to continuously improve the quality of teaching, ensuring all children make strong progress from their starting points.

- The annual School Development Plan contains a broad objective linked to the quality of teaching and Learning. The SDP is reviewed termly with progress towards the objective reported to Governors.
- The effectiveness of teaching and learning is regularly monitored through termly observations, regular learning walks, and data analysis.
- SLT and subject leaders carry out termly work scrutiny and pupil voice, identifying strengths and setting and reviewing next steps.
- Feedback is provided to staff to support their professional growth and development.

## 11. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Headteacher:** Oversee the implementation of the policy and ensure resources are available.
- **Teachers:** Deliver high-quality teaching, assess pupil progress, and engage in professional development.
- **Support Staff:** Assist in creating an effective learning environment.
- **Pupils:** Engage actively in their learning and adhere to the school's behaviour expectations.
- **Parents/Carers:** Support their child's learning and participate in school activities.
- **Governors:** Receive regular updates on the quality of teaching and learning and monitor.

## **12. Parental Partnership and Community Involvement**

We recognise that parents are a child's first educators and value strong home-school partnerships. We:

- Communicate regularly through newsletters, meetings and online platforms.
- Involve parents in curriculum events, workshops and celebrations.
- Encourage shared responsibility for learning, including reading and homework support at home.
- Work closely with parish, community and external agencies to enrich learning opportunities.