

A Framework for Developing a Distinctive Approach to Teaching and Learning at Holy Rood Catholic Primary School

Introduction

Our approach to learning and teaching is radically distinctive, for at the heart of Catholic Education lies the Christian view of the human person. We recognise and acknowledge the hugely important role that adults in school play in the learning process and we also recognise our role to support parents in the education of their children.

- We believe in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, - that God chose to become fully human in the person of Jesus Christ. This calls us to recognise that all humanity is blessed and that each individual is made in the image and likeness of God with a divine origin and an eternal destiny, worthy of deep respect. Everyone in this school community is therefore of equal value; no one more important than anyone else; this is reflected in our approach to learning and teaching.

- We believe in the Catholic truth of sacramental reality. We believe that God is everywhere and that there is no distinction between the sacred and the ordinary. Because of this we recognise God's presence among us in all areas of the curriculum and life. We celebrate this belief in worship and liturgy – and believe that all learning and teaching is sacred.

In light of these fundamental Catholic truths we believe children learn best when:

1. They are happy, safe and secure

2. They are stimulated, motivated, challenged and engaged in their own learning

3. They achieve success which is recognised and celebrated and that they love learning

4. Tasks match their potential within an 'I can do' culture.

5. Activities are clearly understood and match the learning objective

6. They understand the boundaries of acceptable behaviour

7. They are in a learning environment where mistakes are used as opportunities for growth, there are no put-downs and they are encouraged to develop personal beliefs and values

8. They receive support and encouragement from home

9. All adults involved in the learning process acknowledge the significant positive impact they can have in nurturing human wholeness.

1. To help children be happy, safe and secure we will:

- Greet them with a smile, be positive and be there for the children
- Use routines and rituals (e.g. register, prayers, jobs makes children feel secure)
- Allow them to feel safe, both physically and emotionally by encouraging positive relationships, listening to them and valuing their opinions
- Be fair and consistent in our behaviour
- Be firm but forgiving in the light of our Christian ethos
- Affirm good behaviour and good work
- Set clear boundaries and use positive behaviour management

2. To achieve success and gain approval we will:

- Let the children know we believe in them as learners
- Recognise that children learn in different ways and teach accordingly.
- Try to praise each child more than we criticise
- Recognise and value achievement in all fields
- Give positive and frequent feedback for effort and achievement
- Value everyone's positive contribution
- Encourage a 'can do' attitude amongst children
- Encourage children to take on responsibility and develop independence in their actions and their learning
- Help children realise they are responsible for their own success
- Have good subject knowledge themselves and keep their own learning up to date

3. To plan for all ability needs we will:

- Try to appreciate how their interests and motivations may differ from our own.
- Use first hand experience as a basis for work as often as possible.
- Establish links with the local community and parish to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- Use novel materials and artefacts wherever possible.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Be well planned.
- Use a variety of teaching techniques and groupings, including mixed ability and like ability groups as appropriate.
- Encourage appropriate speaking and listening skills.

- Use / adapt the Accelerated Learning Cycle including a multi - sensory approach to teaching (Visual Auditory Kinaesthetic)
- Use open-ended tasks such as problems and investigations.
- Encourage independent thinking and learning.
- Encourage children of different ages to work together.
- Take account of prior learning.

4. Learning will be progressive and continuous as we will ensure that lesson design incorporates the following:

- Set Realistic but challenging targets.
- Continual assessment, both formative and summative to ensure progression.
- Clear differentiation and pitch for all children in order to develop their full potential.
- Lessons will have pace and academic rigour.
- The learning objective to be made explicit at the start of each lesson.
- An overview of what is to come and what will be expected of them ~ the success criteria for children.
- Pupil/teacher interaction.
- Opportunities for peer and self assessment.
- The use of plenary sessions to review what has been learned.
- Information regarding the next stage of learning.
- Strategies for the effective deployment of additional adults.
- Opportunities that encourage children to be questioners.
- A broad and varied curriculum with activity as the main ingredient.
- Teaching strategies to promote independent learning.

5. To ensure children are challenged and stimulated we will:

- Be active learners ourselves.
- Maintain the highest expectations.
- Find stimulating starting points and artefacts for lessons.
- Provide a broad and varied curriculum with activity as the major ingredient.
- Encourage children to be questioners.
- Provide stimulating displays.
- Remember children have a concentration span when we talk to them of approximately as many minutes as their chronological age.

6. In creating an effective and secure learning environment we will ensure children have the opportunity to:

- Make decisions and use initiative
- Develop social skills, to work cooperatively and collaboratively
- Learn in a brain friendly environment that stimulates and enriches with access to water, background music where appropriate, green leafy plants, different learning zones for subjects, interesting artefacts, posters and quotations, use of colour, etc.
- Solve problems
- Be creative
- Discuss their ideas
- Explain what they have learned to others
- Select appropriate tools and materials for a task from a set of well organised resources
- Achieve academically
- Receive support but develop independence
- Make mistakes in the secure knowledge that this is human nature

7. To help children receive support and encouragement from home we will:

- Give parents sufficient information about what is happening in school.
- Set homework in accordance with the school's homework policy.
- Contact parents as soon as problems occur.
- Let parents know of their child(ren)'s successes.
- Encourage children to talk to their parents about what they have learned.
- Welcome parents when they visit the school.

Some key principles to keep in mind

- Progress of children is key
- Are they enjoying their work?
- Are there some children who are 'passive learners' ~ just drifting along and not engaged? If so, why?
- Do children know what they have to do?
- Is there challenge and differentiation?
- Are the support staff effectively involved?
- What is it that I do as a teacher that impacts on learning?

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