

Teaching and Learning Policy



This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This includes referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.

Reviewed by: FGB Autumn 2026

Review period: Annually

Next review due: Autumn 2027

“For I know the plans I have for you....plans to give you hope and a future”

Jeremiah 29

Introduction

Purpose of this policy

This policy sets out our approach to teaching and learning at St Peter's CofE Infant School. It provides a clear framework for all staff, governors, parents and carers to understand:

- What we believe about how children learn
- How we teach to ensure all pupils make good progress
- How we assess and respond to pupils' learning needs
- The roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in our pupils' education
- How we monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning

This policy should be read alongside our other key policies, particularly those relating to curriculum, assessment, behaviour, SEND, and safeguarding.

Our vision for teaching and learning

At St Peter's CofE Infant School, we are committed to providing an excellent education for every child. Our Christian values of love, respect, kindness, and perseverance underpin everything we do.

We believe that:

- Every child deserves the very best teaching and learning opportunities
- All children can achieve and succeed when given the right support and challenge
- Learning should be engaging, purposeful and rooted in our local community and Christian ethos
- Children thrive when they feel safe, valued and confident to take risks in their learning
- Strong partnerships between school, home and our wider community enhance children's learning

Our teaching and learning approach is designed to:

- Develop the whole child – academically, socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually
- Build strong foundations in literacy and numeracy
- Foster curiosity, creativity and a love of learning
- Prepare children for their next steps in education and life
- Celebrate each child's unique gifts and talents

Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to:

- All teaching staff, including the headteacher and any supply teachers
- All support staff, including teaching assistants and learning support assistants
- Governors
- Pupils
- Parents and carers

Links to our Church of England ethos

As a Church of England school, our approach to teaching and learning reflects our Christian values. We recognise that every child is made in the image of God and has unique potential. Our teaching:

- Nurtures the spiritual development of every child
- Encourages children to show love, kindness and respect to others
- Develops resilience and perseverance through challenge
- Celebrates diversity and promotes inclusion
- Provides opportunities for reflection and wonder
- Connects learning to our Christian values and the wider world

“The rich curriculum and wide extra-curricular offer, including themed weeks, reflect the school’s vision of ‘learning for life’. These experiences build pupils’ confidence and support their transition to the next stage of their education.”

SIAMs March 2026

The Curriculum

Our Curriculum is designed to engage the children’s interest and is bespoke to our School, our location, and our community. Each year groups’ curriculum map is based on quality core texts and exciting cross - curricular topics that inspire and engage. This is reviewed and revised annually. Planning has sharp objectives, based on pupils’ prior knowledge and skills development. Planning is informed by formative and summative assessment and sequential steps in learning linked to evaluation of pupil’s current understanding.

We believe that children learn best when ...

- the curriculum is carefully planned and structured
- the curriculum is broad, balanced and challenging, catering for all individual needs and abilities
- the curriculum provides rich and stimulating experiences
- teaching staff have a clear awareness of the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes children need in order to achieve their full potential
- they are well prepared for the next stage in their education
- teaching staff understand that children learn in different styles and from each other
- they are able to make links between different areas of their learning
- learning builds on what the children can do already providing continuity, application, embedding and progression
- teaching staff observe, adapt and respond appropriately, sometimes following pupils’ interests
- child initiated and teacher directed play is valued as a vehicle for learning
- there are very high expectations of work and behaviour
- they have many opportunities for enquiry, problem solving and are asked rich open-ended questions
- effective use is made of outdoor spaces so they can work on a larger more active scale and have unexpected and unforeseen opportunities
- the local environment is used purposefully but creatively as a resource
- curriculum policies are negotiated, agreed and reviewed by staff and governors
- staff work in a reflective way and continually evaluate the quality of the curriculum
- the curriculum is well resourced
- the curriculum is supported by all members of staff and outside agencies
- pupils extend and reinforce their learning at home because parents have the information they need

How Children Learn at St Peter's School

We recognise that children enter school at different stages of development and learn in different ways and at different rates of progress. Our teaching responds to these differences by providing varied learning experiences and opportunities.

Learning through varied experiences

Children develop their knowledge, skills and understanding through a rich variety of learning experiences, including:

Practical and exploratory learning:

- Investigation and experimentation
- Practical exploration using concrete resources and manipulatives
- Child-initiated play (particularly in EYFS)
- Role play and drama

Communication and interaction:

- Talking and discussion with peers and adults
- Asking questions and seeking answers
- Listening to others and responding
- Presenting and sharing ideas

Thinking and problem-solving:

- Observing and noticing patterns
- Making choices and decisions
- Problem-solving and reasoning
- Imagining and creating

Practice and consolidation:

- Repetition to build fluency and automaticity
- Retrieving information from memory
- Applying learning in new contexts
- Reflecting on what has been learned

Learning in different contexts

To meet the diverse needs of our pupils, learning takes place through:

- **Whole-class teaching:** for introducing new concepts, modelling, and shared learning experiences
- **Small group work:** for targeted teaching, collaborative tasks, and peer learning (groups may be organised by ability, mixed ability, friendship, or interest, depending on the learning objective)
- **Paired work:** for discussion, peer support, and collaborative problem-solving
- **One-to-one support:** with an adult or peer for focused intervention or challenge
- **Independent learning:** to build self-reliance, apply skills, and demonstrate understanding

We recognise that collaborative learning is valuable, but also provide opportunities for quiet, focused individual work.

Meeting individual needs

We understand that:

- Children have different starting points and prior experiences
- Progress happens at different rates
- Some children need more time, practice or support to master concepts

- Some children are ready for greater challenge and depth

Our teaching is responsive to these differences through careful assessment, differentiation, and targeted support (see Teaching Strategies and Styles section).

Our approach to teaching

At St Peter's Infant School, we believe that high-quality teaching is the foundation of successful learning. Our teachers use a range of evidence-based strategies to ensure all children can access learning and make progress, regardless of their starting points.

Core teaching principles

All teaching at St Peter's will:

- Be informed by ongoing assessment of pupils' understanding and prior knowledge
- Use explicit instruction alongside opportunities for exploration and discovery
- Provide appropriate challenge for all learners through effective differentiation
- Build pupils' confidence and independence gradually through structured support
- Create a positive learning environment where mistakes are valued as part of the learning process
- Ensure equity of access for all pupils, including those with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, and those who use English as an additional language (EAL)

Key teaching strategies

Teachers will employ a variety of strategies within and across lessons, selecting approaches that best support the learning objectives and meet pupils' needs:

1. Modelling and demonstration

Teachers will model skills, processes and thinking explicitly, including:

- **Worked examples:** showing step-by-step how to complete a task or solve a problem
- **Think-aloud:** verbalising thought processes while demonstrating a skill (e.g., "I'm going to re-read this sentence because it doesn't make sense")
- **Shared writing/reading:** creating texts together as a class, incorporating pupils' ideas while demonstrating good practice
- **Showing mistakes and corrections:** deliberately making errors and modelling how to identify and fix them

2. Gradual release of responsibility

Learning moves through structured stages from teacher-led to independent:

- **"I do":** Teacher models and explains the skill or concept
- **"We do":** Teacher and pupils work together with high levels of support
- **"You do together":** Pupils work in pairs or small groups with teacher guidance
- **"You do independently":** Pupils apply learning independently

This approach ensures pupils have the knowledge and confidence they need before working independently, reducing cognitive overload and building success.

3. Questioning and dialogue

Effective questioning deepens understanding and checks learning:

Types of questions used:

- **Closed questions:** to check factual knowledge and recall (e.g., "What is 5 + 3?")
- **Open questions:** to promote deeper thinking and reasoning (e.g., "Why do you think the character made that choice?")
- **Probing questions:** to extend thinking (e.g., "Can you explain how you worked that out?")

- **Redirecting questions:** to involve more pupils (e.g., "Do you agree with what Sam said? Why?")

Talk strategies include:

- Think-pair-share: giving pupils time to think individually, discuss with a partner, then share with the class
- No hands up: ensuring all pupils are ready to answer, not just those who volunteer
- Wait time: allowing at least 3-5 seconds after asking a question for pupils to formulate answers
- Sentence stems: providing language structures to support responses (e.g., "I think... because...")
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4. Scaffolding and differentiation

Teachers provide tailored support to enable all pupils to access learning:

Scaffolding strategies include:

- Breaking tasks into smaller, manageable steps
- Providing word banks, sentence starters, or writing frames
- Using visual aids, concrete resources and manipulatives (particularly in maths)
- Pre-teaching key vocabulary or concepts to identified pupils
- Providing worked examples or partially completed models
- Using checklists or success criteria to guide pupils

Differentiation by:

- **Task:** adapting the activity to match pupils' needs while maintaining the same learning objective
- **Support:** varying the level of adult or peer support provided
- **Resource:** providing different materials or tools (e.g., number lines, visual prompts)
- **Outcome:** allowing pupils to demonstrate understanding in different ways
- **Challenge:** providing extension activities or deeper questions for pupils who are ready

5. Retrieval and reinforcement

To support long-term retention and fluency:

- **Regular retrieval practice:** short activities to recall previously learned content (e.g., quick maths facts, phonics review)
- **Spaced repetition:** revisiting concepts at intervals over time
- **Interleaving:** mixing different topics or skills within a lesson or sequence
- **Opportunities for practice:** providing sufficient time to rehearse and embed skills

6. Feedback and responsive teaching

Teachers continuously assess and respond to pupils' understanding:

- **In-the-moment feedback:** verbal feedback during lessons, addressing misconceptions immediately
- **Live marking:** marking work while pupils are completing it, providing instant guidance
- **Whole-class feedback:** identifying common errors or misconceptions and addressing them with the whole class
- **Next steps:** clear guidance on how pupils can improve (see Marking and Feedback Policy)

Teachers adapt their teaching based on assessment information, re-teaching concepts when necessary or moving learning forward when pupils are ready.

Teaching across different learning contexts:

Whole-class teaching

Used for:

- Introducing new concepts or skills
- Modelling and demonstration
- Shared reading and writing

- Class discussions and questioning
- Reviewing and consolidating learning

Group work

Groups may be organised by:

- **Ability**: for targeted teaching at the right level (flexible grouping that changes based on the topic/skill)
- **Mixed ability**: to promote peer learning and collaboration
- **Friendship**: to build confidence and social skills
- **Interest**: to increase engagement and motivation

Teachers will use guided group work to provide focused teaching to small groups while other pupils work independently.

Paired work

Pupils work with a partner to:

- Discuss ideas before writing or sharing with the class
- Support each other's learning through peer teaching
- Practise skills collaboratively (e.g., reading to each other)
- Complete collaborative tasks

Independent work

Pupils work alone to:

- Apply what they've learned
- Practise skills to build fluency
- Demonstrate their understanding
- Develop self-reliance and resilience

Teachers build pupils' capacity for independent work gradually, ensuring they have the knowledge and skills needed to succeed.

Developing key skills across the curriculum

At St Peter's Infant School, we recognise that pupils need to develop skills that extend beyond individual subjects. These are woven throughout our curriculum:

Communication skills

- Speaking clearly and confidently in different contexts
- Listening actively and responding appropriately
- Using talk to develop and organise ideas
- Presenting information to different audiences
- Developing vocabulary and language structures

Mathematical thinking

- Applying number skills in real-life contexts
- Using mathematical language accurately
- Problem-solving and reasoning
- Recognising patterns and relationships

Collaborative skills

- Working effectively with others
- Taking turns and sharing ideas
- Respecting different viewpoints
- Contributing to group tasks

Thinking skills

- **Creative thinking**: generating ideas, making connections, imagining possibilities
- **Critical thinking**: questioning, analysing, evaluating
- **Problem-solving**: identifying problems, trying different approaches, persevering
- **Reasoning**: explaining thinking, justifying answers, making logical connections

- **Reflection:** thinking about what has been learned and how to improve

Learning behaviours

- Taking responsibility for their own learning
- Showing curiosity and asking questions
- Persevering when tasks are challenging
- Learning from mistakes
- Setting and working towards goals

Specialist teaching and enrichment

Learning is enhanced through:

- **Subject leader input:** subject leaders provide specialist teaching and support when timetables allow
- **Visiting experts:** bringing real-world expertise into the classroom (e.g., authors, musicians, scientists)
- **Educational visits:** providing first-hand experiences that enrich the curriculum
- **Cross-curricular links:** making meaningful connections between subjects

Inclusive teaching for all learners

For pupils with SEND:

- Reduce cognitive load by breaking tasks into clear, individual steps
- Provide additional thinking and processing time
- Use visual supports, concrete resources and multi-sensory approaches
- Offer pre-teaching of key concepts or vocabulary
- Provide clear success criteria and checklists
- Ensure instructions are clear, concise and repeated as needed
- (See SEND Policy for full details)

For disadvantaged pupils:

- Build background knowledge explicitly before tasks
- Be mindful of assumed experiences when setting creative tasks
- Provide frequent, short writing and practice opportunities
- Model what 'good' looks like with clear examples
- Pre-teach tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary
- Ensure access to quality resources and experiences

For pupils who use EAL:

- Pre-teach key vocabulary before lessons
- Provide visual and contextual support (pictures, real objects, demonstrations)
- Use model sentences that pupils can adapt
- Pair with confident English speakers for collaborative tasks
- Allow rehearsal of ideas orally before writing
- Celebrate and value pupils' home languages

For more able pupils:

- Provide greater depth challenges rather than just 'more work'
- Use open-ended questions and tasks
- Encourage reasoning, justification and explanation
- Provide opportunities to apply learning in new contexts
- Foster independence and self-directed learning

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In Reception, teaching balances adult-led and child-initiated learning:

- **Play-based learning:** both child-initiated and adult-directed play are valued as powerful vehicles for learning
- **Continuous provision:** well-planned indoor and outdoor environments that enable exploration and discovery

- **Adult interaction:** skilled adults who observe, interact and extend children's learning through play
- **Focused teaching:** short, focused adult-led sessions to teach specific skills (e.g., phonics, maths)
- **Learning through talk:** developing language and communication through rich interactions
- **Outdoor learning:** daily access to outdoor learning that complements and extends indoor provision

Monitoring and development

The effectiveness of teaching strategies is monitored through:

- Lesson observations and learning walks by senior leaders and subject leaders
- Work scrutiny to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning
- Pupil progress meetings to review outcomes
- Staff feedback and professional dialogue
- Sharing of best practice through staff meetings, coaching and peer observations

All staff engage in continuous professional development to refine and develop their teaching practice.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Regular assessments are made of pupils' work in order to establish the level of attainment and to inform future planning. Formative assessment is used to guide the progress of individual pupils. It involves identifying each child's progress in each area of the curriculum, determining what each child has learned and what therefore should be the next stage in his/her learning.

Formal summative assessment is no longer statutory at the end of Key Stage 1 for Years 2 pupils, but they will continue to be assessed through the use of SATs papers to inform end of year teacher judgements. Phonics are tested in Year 1 and re-tested where necessary in Year 2. An initial statutory assessment called the RBA (Reception Baseline Assessment) is used in Reception/Early Years within six weeks of starting school and Foundation Stage Profiles are maintained.

Assessment information is used to:

- Identify pupils who need additional support or intervention
- Plan next steps in learning for individuals and groups
- Adapt teaching in response to pupils' understanding
- Track progress over time
- Inform discussions with parents about their child's learning

Suitable tasks for assessment may include:

- group discussions;
- short tests in which pupils write answers;
- specific assignments for individual pupils;
- discussions in which children are encouraged to appraise their own work and progress;
- pupil observations;
- SATs papers.

Feedback to pupils about their own progress is achieved through discussion and the marking of work.

Effective marking:

- helps children understand how to improve and comments aim to be positive and constructive;
- is often done while a task is being carried out through discussion between child and teacher;
- of written work is used sensitively and with discretion so that a child can assimilate a limited number of corrections at one time. This will vary according to the age, ability and task.

All results from assessments are analysed and used to inform future planning.
See our Marking and Feedback Policy for full details of our approach.

Classroom organisation

We believe that children learn best when ...

- the classroom environment is vibrant, safe, stimulating, challenging and motivating
- the classroom promotes self-discipline, resilience and independence in a continuous learning environment
- activities are purposeful and differentiated
- the organisation is appropriate for the age of the children, their ability and for those children with special educational needs and disabilities
- there is flexibility in the grouping of the children
- the organisation and resources are reviewed regularly and updated in line with current practice
- resources are well organised, labelled and easily available to teachers and children

Displays

We believe children learn best when:

- The classroom is well-organised, safe and promotes independence
- Resources are clearly labelled and accessible to pupils
- There are designated areas for different types of learning
- Visual supports help pupils understand routines and expectations
- Working walls display current learning and can be interacted with
- The environment is adapted to meet the needs of all learners, including those with SEND

Continuing Professional Development

- Teachers are instrumental in their own Professional Development; actively taking part in CPD sessions within school and elsewhere.
- Teaching and learning is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and subject leaders through work scrutiny and lesson observations, for example.
- Verbal and written feedback is given to individuals and at times generic feedback to staff in staff meetings.
- Best practice is shared through a variety of channels e.g. Staff meetings, lesson observations, coaching.
- The National Teaching Standards are used for both monitoring and appraisal purposes.
- Teachers evaluate themselves against these standards for self-appraisal.

What must staff at St Peter's School do to teach well and support learning?

Teachers must:

- Know their children and differentiate teaching to meet each individual learning needs
- Plan and assess what is taught and identify next steps in learning
- Provide interesting and challenging lessons; make learning opportunities relevant to the needs and interests of learners and plan opportunities for deeper learning and understanding
- Motivate, inspire curiosity and promote a good attitude to encourage positive learning behaviours
- Use effective marking and feedback to engage and extend learning to include ways forward/now try this etc
- Have high expectations for all learners and celebrate achievement with the child
- Address underachievement and intervene promptly and robustly
- Have strong subject knowledge and follow the school's policies at all times
- Create a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment
- Actively engage parents and carers in their children's learning in school and at home
- Adapt questioning to test and challenge children's understanding and promote deeper thinking
- Moderate children's work regularly with colleagues to ensure accuracy of making judgements
- Engage in high quality CPD through a range of opportunities including staff meetings, twilights, courses at and beyond St Peter's and observing and sharing good practice. CPD is linked to school priorities and individual needs identified through appraisal.

To effectively promote learning Support staff will

- Know the children and differentiate support to meet their individual learning needs
- Support teaching and learning with flexibility and resourcefulness
- Use agreed assessment for learning strategies
- Use effective marking and feedback as required
- Engage in planning and providing inspiring lessons
- Communicate and feedback observations of children to teachers
- Ask questions to ensure clarity of expectation
- Support the teacher with preparing resources to support learning
- Have high expectations for all learners and celebrate achievement
- Demonstrate and model self as a learner

Leaders will support learning

- Model respect, consideration and kindness to all
- Inspire all members of the learning community to achieve personal excellence
- Celebrate achievement at all levels
- Have high expectations for all staff and children
- Provide support and guidance through coaching and mentoring
- Hold staff and children to account for their behaviour and actions
- Plan and evaluate policies and strategies to secure high quality learning
- Manage resources to support high quality learning
- Promote team working at all levels
- Address underachievement and intervene promptly

Learners will support learning by

- Take responsibility for their own learning
- Be able to work alone with confidence and independence
- Be able to work co-operatively and support other learners
- Respect the rights of others to learn
- Put maximum effort into all work, staying focussed at all times
- Know their targets and how to improve
- Complete home learning activities regularly
- Follow the school rules and behave responsibly towards self and others
- Show enthusiasm and curiosity for ideas

Governors will support learning by

- Know the school well and understand the strategic overview of the school
- Be known to and familiar to all staff and pupils
- Attend meetings, monitor activities and special events
- Monitor progress and standards of teaching and learning throughout the school
- Observe and monitor the life of the school according to agreed protocols
- Promote the school in the wider school community
- Represent the school to outside agencies
- Feedback observations in the appropriate forum
- Provide positive role model as volunteers
- Respect confidentiality
- Support staff in providing a range of curricula and extra-curricular activities

Supporting documents for this policy

- Accessibility Policy
- Assessment policy
- Behaviour Management policy
- Equalities Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Marking and Feedback policy
- School Development Plan
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Online Safety Policy