

St. Luke's Learning and Teaching POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Marking and Feedback Policy.

Policy agreed:

To be reviewed: Annually

Aims

At St. Luke's, we recognise that quality classroom practice is the key to improving learning and raising pupil achievement. The policy aims to outline the fundamental principles which underpin all learning and teaching at our school.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our policies on behaviour, marking and feedback, other curriculum policies and our curriculum map.

Key Principles of Learning and Teaching

Article 28 of the UN Rights of the Child

You have the right to a good quality education.

You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

Our approach to learning and teaching at St. Luke's is based on the principles of assessment for learning, and, in particular, the work of Shirley Clarke. The research evidence for this is significant (see 'Visible Learning' by John Hattie, 2009).

The key ingredients of assessment for learning are:-

- A learning culture, where children and adults have a growth mind-set, meta-cognitive skills and the belief that all can succeed;
- Involving pupils at the planning stage;
- Talk partners and a no hands up culture;
- Mixed ability learning with differentiated choices so that self-esteem is intact and expectations are high;
- Clear and shared learning objectives;
- Co-constructed success criteria;
- Effective questioning;
- A continual quest to find out how far children are understanding their learning, so that individual and class feedback and the direction of the lesson can be adjusted appropriately;
- Examples of excellence analysed and shared;
- Feedback from peers and teachers which focuses on successes, where the excellence is and where improvements are needed;
- Co-operative peer feedback via mid lesson stops, so that feedback and improvement is immediate and part of the lesson;
- Effective ends to lessons, where learning is summarised and reflected upon.

Developing a Learning Culture

At St. Luke's, we believe that the route to developing a 'smarter brain' is practice and input. We aim to encourage and develop a growth mindset in all the adults and children who are part of our school community (see 'Mindset' by Carol Dweck, 2006). To this end, we use language that promotes the idea that time and effort are key to learning and that everyone is capable of improvement.

Language that encourages a growth mindset	Language that encourages a fixed mindset (avoid these!)
I'm really impressed with your thinking/effort/ideas Comments about challenges (because they've worked hard) Look how much you've achieved What have you learned? Higher/lower achievers (not fixed)	I need a big strong boy You're always good at that You did that really easily You must be so and so's sister/brother That's a good picture More able/less able (fixed)

We encourage children to see mistakes as an essential part of learning and use them as a useful teaching point.

We believe that successful learners:-

- Concentrate
- Persevere
- Are co-operative
- Are curious, look for patterns and make links
- Have a go and learn from mistakes
- Use their imagination
- Keep evaluating and trying to improve
- Enjoy learning.

As part of our establishment week at the beginning of a new school year, we discuss learning in class and produce a display that reinforces the characteristics of successful learning. These are reinforced through teaching and through our interactions throughout the year.

Planning

Planning needs to begin with selecting appropriate learning objectives according to the needs of the class, based on prior learning and experience, and with regard to the school curriculum map and the national curriculum.

Learning objectives are presented to the children as WALT (we are learning to) and must be short and be about the skill, not the context. In other words, describe the learning that is planned for, not the activity.

Learning objectives should:-

- Set challenging expectations;
- Be used as an assessment tool for future learning;
- Support longer-term learning outcomes;
- Be used to decide the type of activities to be undertaken during a lesson.

In order for the learning objective to be planned for effectively, the teacher must:-

- Have a clear understanding of what the learning objective means,
- Know what a quality outcome would look like,
- Be able to compare what they witness to that concept.

And the children must:-

- Possess a concept of the standard or goal being aimed for
- Compare the current level of performance with the goal and
- Engage in appropriate action which leads to some closure of the gap.

Sometimes there will be two learning objectives, especially in subjects other than English and maths; the knowledge we want the children to acquire and the skill they will use in acquiring or applying that knowledge.

Success criteria break the learning objective down into small steps, so the children know what they have to do in order to achieve success. Effective success criteria:-

- Need to be known, in a basic form, by the teachers in advance of the teaching;
- May be generated by the children to have maximum impact on learning;
- May need to be differentiated, especially in maths;
- Should set out the steps the children need to take to be successful, or what they need to include;
- Should be constantly referred to by the children and checked or ticked off;
- With open LOs, can be used to decide on success and improvement in feedback.

At St. Luke's, we refer to the success criteria as 'Remember to'.

Teaching Strategies

1. Learning Partners

A key element of our teaching at St. Luke's is the use of learning partners. We recognise that the development of good speaking and listening skills is essential for learners to be able to articulate their thinking and extend their learning.

Learning partners should:-

- Be set partners
- Be changed regularly/weekly/fortnightly?
- Have randomly selected partners
- Have co-constructed success criteria to enable talk training and self and peer evaluation.

2. Language structures

We know that many of our children benefit from the explicit teaching of language structures to help them to explain their thinking and take part in discussions. We use the Tower Hamlets Language Structures to support us with this. We model good use of spoken language and use of the specific language structures being taught. We expect and support the children to use them as well.

3. Lesson starters

How lessons begin sets the tone for the rest of the lesson. Starting a lesson by capturing the children's interest or giving them a quick task to do gets all of the children instantly engaged and thinking about the subject matter of the lesson. The children need to know the learning objective at the point at which they are engaging in any task that will be judged against that learning objective. Sometimes the best point is the beginning of the lesson, but there are times when it is better to introduce the learning objective at a later point.

4. Interactive strategies

There are numerous interactive strategies which can be used to engage learners during whole class teaching. They include:-

- Mini-whiteboards/ show me;
- True/ false sorting activities or statements;
- Cards/ number fans;
- Use of 'no hands up' random selection after discussion in learning partners;
- Use of 'building blocks' hands or thumbs down to show a wish to build on the point made or disagree with it;
- Use of drama or role play;
- Hot-seating;
- Here's the answer, what's the question?
- Giving a range of answers for discussion;
- Odd one out.

We use the information gained during these activities to shift the focus of the lesson if necessary, either for the class as a whole or for individuals within it.

5. Modelling

A key aspect of teaching at St. Luke's is the clear and specific modelling of the task that the children are required to do. This involves the teacher in modelling good learning strategies such as thinking aloud, explaining choices and comparing one possibility with another. One highly recommended strategy is to use a good model to analyse and set success criteria from.

6. Mid-lesson breaks/ mini plenaries

These have an important role to play in addressing any misconceptions, in supporting children to achieve the success criteria and in helping them to evaluate and improve their own work. One strategy is to photograph a good example of a child's work and use it to discuss, evaluate and improve by displaying the iPad through the interactive whiteboard. Following a mid-lesson break, the children will be expected to use the input to improve their own work.

7. Effective questioning

Effective questioning means challenging children to deepen their thinking. Children's responses are used to adapt the lesson if required. Examples of good questioning include:-

- What do you mean by ...?
- Why do you think ..?
- Give me an example of what you mean.
- Can you/ anyone develop that?
- So why is this one better than that?
- How could you change this to make it clearer/ more effective?
- What makes this tricky?

8. Group/ independent work strategies

As the promotion of speaking and listening is a key priority at St. Luke's, the children are given opportunities to work collaboratively or to share their ideas with others on a regular basis. Strategies for collaborative learning, which help to make the curriculum accessible for all learners, include:-

- Snowballing (learning partners first, then share with another pair);
- Jigsaw (each group researches one aspect of a topic, becoming 'experts'. Then reorganise into groups with an expert from each aspect to complete a task using the expertise of each member;
- Mind/ concept mapping;
- Drama and role play;
- Using speaking frames (see TH language structures for guidance).

9. Differentiation

The children at St. Luke's have diverse learning needs, so differentiation is essential in order to maximise learning for all children. Differentiation can occur in:-

- The content delivered (teachers being clear about the knowledge, skills and attitudes they want each group or individual to learn);
- Deepening knowledge and understanding;
- The learning process (varying learning activities or strategies);
- The product (varying the complexity of the product expected);
- The environment in the classroom (using different teaching styles, groupings, levels of support).

Teaching and learning may be personalized to meet a child's needs by using some of the following strategies:-

- Providing appropriate resources;
- Planning for support of groups or individuals;
- Providing writing frames appropriate to the child;
- Scaffolding support as appropriate;
- Providing word banks/ pictures;
- Adapting success criteria;
- Promoting independent choice;
- Providing alternative ways of recording work.

In order to differentiate effectively, teachers must first have a clear understanding of exactly where each child is in their learning.

To promote independent choice and encourage children to challenge themselves, one strategy is to offer different levels of difficulty and allow the children to decide the level at which they start.

10. Pupil groupings

At St. Luke's, we believe that children should work collaboratively with others in a range of different groupings in order to enrich their learning opportunities and experiences. Learning partners are randomly selected, frequently leading to mixed-ability pairings, and this consideration should be given to extending this into group work. Any grouping should be fluid and relevant to the needs of the children.

11. Ends of lessons

The end of a lesson provides another opportunity to probe children's level of understanding and encourage them to reflect on their learning. Strategies include:-

- Writing down or sharing with learning partner what they have learnt;
- Getting the children to ask one question about the lesson e.g. what if...? Next could we...? Can I find out more about..?
- Writing advice to a fictitious child whose inaccurate work is on the screen;
- A final example of what they have been learning;
- Explaining the success criteria in their own words;
- What they are most pleased with about their learning and one thing they still want to work on.

The information gained from the end of the lesson should be used in follow-up planning for the whole class, groups or individuals as appropriate.

12. Resources

At St. Luke's, we recognise that it is key to provide carefully chosen, clear and visually stimulating resources in order to support children with EAL, SEND and for all learners. We use ICT alongside other resources for this purpose. We aim to ensure that resources offer positive images of different communities and avoid and challenge stereotypes.

13. Marking and feedback

High quality marking and feedback are essential to good learning. Details of St. Luke's approach are included in our marking and feedback policy.

14. Learning Environment

At St. Luke's consistently high standards and expectations are reflected in everything we model and do and particularly through presentation of books and the Learning Environment:

- **Spoken English:** We model correct Standard English at all times and we consistently correct the children and each other: 'I go to the...'
- **Handwriting:** We model the school's chosen cursive handwriting script consistently – on the IWB, when marking....
- **Learning Environment:** We maintain a tidy, uncluttered, carefully structured environment where high standards are literally leaping off the walls!

All learning environments have the following:

- A class information board: with all planning, timetables etc.
- A literacy working wall – that supports the current learning in the class;
- A maths working wall – that supports the current learning in the class;
- Displays of work relating to a range of subjects in studied in that term;
- There is always a display of children's writing, of a standard appropriate to the age of the children;
- An attractive book corner;
- An area devoted to the Christian Faith – with a Bible and a class prayer book;
- A display of the class values, with the value of the week in a box and all children's names so that they can be moved into the value of the week box as they are observed demonstrating that value in practice.

Because we recognise that the support that children require will vary at different times of the year, we avoid taping resources to tables or covering walls with 'Sparkle box'. Instead tables will have resources that the children are encouraged to select when they need them there by also promoting independence in learning.

All classes are also responsible for a display in the main corridors. These will change each term and will summarise the learning taking place in each class both in terms of content and level thereby demonstrating at any given point, progression and continuity across the school as well as curriculum breadth and depth.