St Mary and St Peter Catholic Primary School

Teaching & Learning Policy

October 2025

OUR APPROACH

At St Mary and St Peter Catholic Primary School, our Teaching and Learning approach is founded upon proven, evidence-based research findings. It is rooted in clear pedagogical principles and works alongside our creative, carefully constructed and deliberately sequenced curriculum to provide our pupils with outstanding opportunities for learning.

Through regular, relevant and robust Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) for all adults at St Mary and St Peter, teachers and support staff alike are provided with opportunities to reflect upon their current practice, to explore excellent models of expertise found elsewhere and to refine their approach. All staff participate in continuous professional dialogue around teaching and learning methods. This professional dialogue centres around peer observations of teaching, both whole class and flexible groupings, sharing ideas and resources and the use of a supportive coaching programme. Personal and professional improvement in the quality of teaching and learning at St Mary and St Peter is placed at the heart of what we do.

'Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better'. (Professor Dylan William)

At SMSP we place our mission statement, values and key drivers at the heart of the implementation of our curriculum:

- ***Spirituality (loving caring influence)***
- ***Aspiration (Personal development - Develop knowledge and skills to have the best Impact on the world, self-motivated and resilience)***
- ***Opportunity (broadening/deepening horizons, self-expression, confidence, uniqueness)***
- ***Diversity (embracing cultures, engagement with others, collaboration, acceptance, understanding, respect)***

Our pupils' diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences inform the planning of authentic and meaningful learning opportunities, facilitating the development of social, cultural and global awareness.

Also at the root of our philosophy is the St John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust **'Teaching and Learning'** model, which is explained further within this policy.



ENGAGE

Our Trust Model
'Teachers know their pupils well and engage them in building supportive, inclusive and stimulating learning environments. Teachers motivate and empower students to manage their own learning and develop autonomy. Pupils reflect on what they know, begin to make connections between prior and new learning and organise thinking towards a big question.

What This Looks Like At St Mary and St Peter:

In designing the sequence of learning, teachers and learners are using a prime learning challenge, expressed as a question, as the starting point. Using the information gained from pre-learning tasks and the school's context, a series of subsidiary challenges are then planned into each session. Each subsidiary learning challenge is also expressed as a question. This helps to scaffold children's learning experiences towards a deeper response which can show a full account of their knowledge and understanding.

An example of an enquiry question: What was our local seaside like in the past?

The subsidiary questions would be:

1. What have you enjoyed about going to the seaside?
2. What did people do at the seaside in the past?
3. What did people wear and how has it changed?
4. What are the traditional seaside foods in this area and how have they changed?
5. What was our local seaside like in the past?

Teachers establish pupils' individual starting points at the beginning of a sequence of work; this recognises that pupils come to new learning with differing levels of prior knowledge and understanding, and that therefore teachers need to know where to scaffold or extend teaching objectives. Starting points are identified through pre-learning tasks such as discussions, challenges, mind-maps or through careful questioning. 'Well planned pre-learning tasks should help to bring out what learners already know; what misconceptions they may have and what interests them' (SJB MAT Teaching and Learning Model).

Once starting points have been established, teachers are then able to plan the learning activities which will best facilitate the learning intentions. Lessons are designed to be well-paced and purposeful, maximizing learning opportunities and minimizing 'dead-time' – for example, the transition time between lessons. Teachers use a wide range of models and resources effectively, along with clear success criteria, so that pupils stay engaged with their learning. Pupils have a clear understanding of what they are trying to achieve and the steps they need to take in order to get there. They are encouraged to evaluate their own learning, suggest improvements and identify their own next steps.

In order to maintain engagement in learning, teachers adapt their teaching to respond to individual, group or class needs. They may use flexible groupings, 'scaffolded' tasks, worked examples, additional practice time, direct instructions or teaching assistant support.

The classroom environment is a key factor in engaging pupils with the teaching and learning process. It should be inviting and well-organised, with carefully chosen and well-kept resources easily available to anyone who needs to independently access them. Displays are relevant and informative; either being an opportunity to showcase excellent examples of work, a revision of previous work or as an aid to ongoing work – for example, a 'Working Wall'. Wherever possible, displays are interactive so as to promote engagement, with prominently displayed vocabulary, labels and/or questions. Pupils are expected to help contribute to, maintain and take pride in their learning environment.

We believe that engagement with parents and carers is a key component to successful learning. Teachers share their planning on the school's website, by sending home Knowledge Organisers and termly curriculum overviews and by inviting parents and carers into the classroom on a regular basis to share in the pupils' learning experience. Wherever possible, we ask parents to share their personal skills and areas of expertise to reinforce or enhance the curriculum.

EXPLAIN

Our Trust Model

'Teachers explicitly introduce and teach relevant knowledge, concepts and skills in multiple ways to connect new and existing knowledge. They challenge misconceptions and prepare pupils to navigate their own learning. Pupils know what excellence looks like and how to achieve it, as well as the mistakes to avoid'.

What This Looks Like At St Mary and St Peter:

Teachers will always introduce new learning by explaining where it fits in with what pupils already know. They will explain why and how pupils will be learning new content, and share what the intended end outcome should look like.

Explanations will be carefully pitched to the age of pupils; all teachers aim to provide 'concise, appropriate, engaging explanations that are just right – neither too short nor too long; neither too complex nor too simple'. (Great Teaching Toolkit Evidence Review - *Evidence Based Education June 2020*)

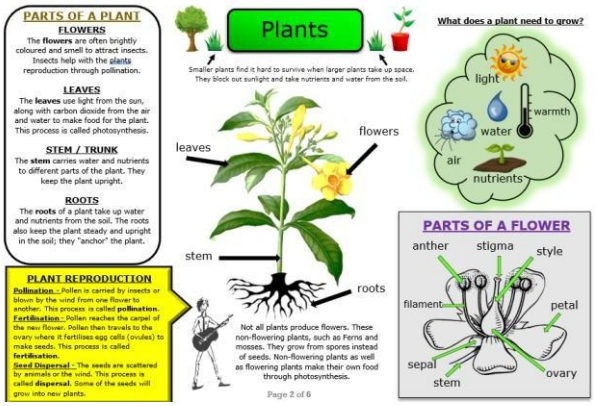
Teachers explain new learning using a wide variety of teaching techniques and carefully sourced resources. They use a scaffold 'I do, we do, you do' approach, 'dual coding' (where images work alongside words or numbers to aid learning) and practical demonstrations where appropriate. Pupils are also encouraged to explain their learning to each other to aid consolidation.

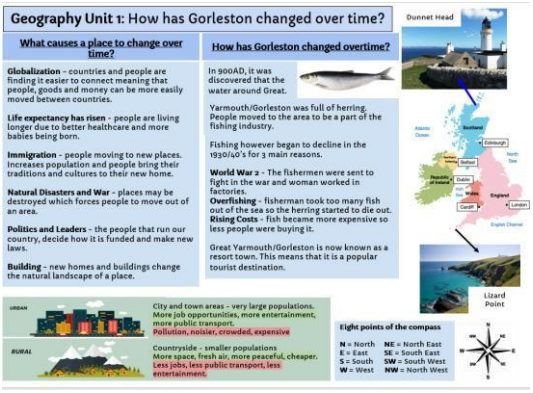
Explanations will be backed up by clear models – both WAGOLLS (What A Good One Looks Like) and WABOLLS (What A Bad One Looks Like) so that pupils have opportunities to explore features that make up examples. Teachers will also 'talk through' their thoughts and actions as they model examples, so that pupils have a clear understanding of the thinking behind practising new learning.

As part of the explanation process, teachers will explicitly share success criteria with pupils so that they are clear about what needs to be included in their work. Wherever possible, success criteria will be jointly constructed with pupils so that they are more directly involved with their own learning.

Knowledge Organisers

These are introduced at the beginning of the learning journey and are referred to throughout the topic. They include the key knowledge in which children are expected to learn and remember. See an example below:





Most knowledge organisers will include:

- the essential facts about the topic, usually laid out in easily digestible chunks
- key vocabulary or technical terms and their meanings
- images such as maps, diagrams and time lines
- famous quotations, if relevant.

Using Knowledge organisers at SMSP:

- Shared at the start of a topic with both children and parents to encourage discussion and prior research.
- Used as a regular retrieval tool. E.g. Mix up practice using short, low stakes quizzes, games, partner discussion, and so on, rather than constant formal testing. Do the children know more than is included on the knowledge organiser? Ask higher-level 'why' questions to stretch the children's understanding and add detail. Used to identify knowledge gaps throughout the topic.
- Are to be kept in the children's books for regular reference.
- Are to be used to make links to help children understand how their learning connects. For example, remind the children of a previous year's knowledge organiser and discuss how their new knowledge links and builds upon it.
- Are to be used to support spelling and the use of key vocabulary. Children are referred back to the knowledge organiser to ensure appropriate vocabulary is used correctly. They are an essential tool for teaching high-tier vocabulary.

EXPLORE

Our Trust Model

'Teachers facilitate and monitor pupil progress in learning and provide multiple, structured opportunities for practising new skills and developing fluency. Pupils build on prior knowledge and explore and investigate objects, events and situations. Pupils construct or revise their own explanations and mental models.(schema)'

What This Looks Like At St Mary and St Peter:

Pupils are provided with numerous opportunities to explore their learning in greater detail through the regular practice and application of both new and previously learned knowledge and skills. New learning is broken down into small chunks, with scaffolds or extensions where appropriate and then practised until pupils are fluent.

Our curriculum is planned in such a way as to allow them to apply their learning in different ways, building firmer connections between what they are taught and ensuring a 'mastery' approach. For example, when they have learned how to add fractions they might practice this skill in a range of problem-solving scenarios, create their own guide to adding fractions or design and deliver a presentation to their peers on the common mistakes pupils might make when they add fractions.

Our curriculum is also deliberately designed so that pupils have built-in opportunities to re-visit concepts, knowledge and skills they have previously been taught in order to consolidate their learning. Research shows that you learn more, and retain it for longer, when you retrieve information in different ways. Regular retrieval practice is planned into lessons and pupils are continually encouraged to identify links between what they already know and what they are being taught. Teachers use a wide range of retrieval techniques, including quizzes, mind-maps and flashcards.

Using retrieval practice helps to build automatic recall of essential knowledge and ideas as it:

- provides time and multiple opportunities for pupils to practise, embed and reinforce new learning until learning is fluent and secure
- Adapts learning, providing support, prompts and scaffolding (guided practice) through the initial stages of practice, including breaking tasks down into smaller constituent components; or providing additional stretch through questions to extend thinking
- Gives pupils opportunities to interact with and support each other in learning
- Uses flexible grouping to support pupils to fill knowledge gaps or deal with misconceptions
- Regularly monitors pupils' understanding and adapts instruction to meet pupils' needs
- Uses a range of questioning techniques to engage pupils, stimulate further investigation and redirect pupils when necessary
- Promotes pupils' independence and prepares them to undertake self-directed inquiry

- Gradually removes support as pupils' expertise increases (e.g. 'I do-We do-You do' mode – from guided to independent practice)

ELABORATE

Our Trust Model
'Teachers challenge pupils to move from surface to deep learning, building their ability to transfer and generalise their learning. They support pupils to be reflective, questioning and self-monitoring learners. Pupils apply, extend or elaborate (stretch) their knowledge and skills through problem solving, designing experiments etc.'

What This Looks Like At St Mary and St Peter:

One of our school drivers is 'Aspiration': we have high expectations for all our pupils no matter what their starting points, and they are all provided with challenge opportunities through a 'high challenge, low threat' approach throughout the curriculum.

Teachers and Subject Leaders have a clear idea of what progression looks like in learning and know how to plan for learning activities which deepen understanding, such as providing opportunities to problem-solve, explain, justify, evaluate, analyse or create. Pupils are expected to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways, working both collaboratively and independently on tasks.

We encourage pupils to 'go deeper' into their learning by teaching them how they can formulate and test their own ideas, find and present evidence to support their thinking and present their findings confidently to an audience. We aim to develop learners who are also able to question others and have independent views backed up by clearly articulated evidence.

Teachers work hard to build strong relationships with all the pupils in their care; this establishment of a positive classroom climate based on mutual trust enables pupils to take risks with their learning – using and applying knowledge autonomously and confronting challenge with confidence.

We recognise that some pupils find challenge difficult; this is why we explicitly teach strategies to help them deal positively with it. From providing easily accessible self-help resources such as number-lines or word-banks, to sentence stems to help them formulate answers, to prominent classroom display reminders about how to approach challenge, St Mary and St Peter is committed to enabling pupils to become autonomous in their response to challenge and to independently stretch their own learning.

Teachers nurture resilience and risk taking by:

- praising pupils for attempting or persevering with challenging work or exceeding expectations
- demonstrating what to do when facing challenging content and how effort leads to learning success
- facilitating learning activities that challenges and deepens knowledge and understanding, including: activities involving discipline-rich inquiry, problem solving, collaboration and pupil choice
- modelling and developing pupils' critical, creative and higher order thinking skills
- supporting pupils to form theories, find patterns and make connections in their learning

- challenging pupils to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways
- encouraging pupils to share their learning and challenge each other
- questioning to probe pupils thinking and prompt them to justify their responses; getting responses from all pupils
- providing pupils with targeted feedback that challenges them to reflect on and refine their understanding at various points in a learning sequence

EXPRESS

Our Trust Model

"Teachers design a range of purposeful tasks/opportunities that enable pupils to express and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the outcome or big question at the end of a sequence of work or topic. Pupils express the knowledge and understanding they have gained to answer the big question, demonstrating that they know and remember more."

What This Looks Like At St Mary and St Peter:

The teacher always begins with the end in mind, designing a sequence of learning around a big question relating to the intended learning outcome. This enables the pupils to express and demonstrate what they know, can do and remember in a variety of ways. The teachers will use a range of tasks to enable the pupils to answer the big question or express and demonstrate what they know, can do and can remember, through Proof of Progress (POP) tasks, these include low stake quizzes, multiple choice tests etc which identify gaps in learning. Teachers also recognise the power of pupil voice in articulating knowledge, which is utilised as an additional assessment tool.

Clear learning intentions and success criteria are set, to enable pupils to review and reflect upon their own learning. We believe that feedback (from adults to pupils, pupils to adults or from pupils to pupils) should primarily be informative, not evaluative. This means that written and verbal feedback is designed to give the learner information which will enable them to continually reflect on their new knowledge, skills and understanding and the learning process, rather than leaving it until the end when the lesson – or sequence of lessons – is over. Feedback, in order to be effective, needs to be' timely, specific and helpful' (Ron Berger).

The way the teacher adjusts and adapts the way they plan and deliver units of work is a fluid process, enabling the teacher to address misconceptions or move flexibly with the learning need as appropriate. The teacher uses formative assessment, which includes observation, questioning, listening, small task completion, to see how the pupil is progressing on their journey towards achieving the learning intention. This information allows them to scaffold the next steps or to challenge pupils more deeply. Summative assessments are completed at the end of a sequence of work or at certain assessment points during the year (through presentations, assessed work, tests etc.)

From Nursery upwards, we encourage pupils to monitor their own progress towards meeting their learning goals and to suggest what they might need to do to next. We do this by always making the

different elements – or 'success criteria' – of a learning task very clear, using visual images as well as words (dual coding) where appropriate.

Peer marking, enables children to exchange constructive feedback with peers and supports them in articulating their next steps - sharing what they would do differently next time.

Other areas of Focus

Live marking

Live marking as the lesson happens encourages children to talk about their learning by reflecting on what they did or are doing. It challenges children to consider how they know they are successful or to know what steps to take next. Children are challenged to prove their understanding by posing responses and explanations in different ways. It is an immediate way of sharing with children their next steps and for them to be involved in this process.

Learning Walls

Learning walls are both a tool for teaching and for children to access to aid their learning. The following can be included on learning walls:

- Maths reasoning stems
- WAGOLLS
- Steps to Success
- Key Vocab
- Thinking prompts
- Worked examples
- Planning stages
- Editing stations
- Children's work that is a good example to others

The Books

Standards in books should demonstrate high expectations from teachers and pupils alike. Children's hearts should be connected to their learning through an aspiration for beautiful work.

Types of lessons- HITS (High Impact Teaching Strategies)

What are High Impact Teaching Strategies?

The High Impact Teaching Strategies (HITS) are nine evidence-informed instructional practices that reliably improve pupils' learning. The HITS will not be new to most teachers. On their own the HITS are not a complete framework for professional practice – they are part of a set of instructional practices which together provide a comprehensive school and MAT Teaching and Learning Model.

Using HITS to teach a concept or skill that pupils need to learn will increases the chances that they will successfully learn it, compared to using other strategies. However, although these practices are reliable,

they are not infallible. Knowing their pupils and how they learn, teachers are best-placed to judge whether a HITS or another strategy is the best choice to teach that concept or skill.

- **Setting Goals** - Effective teachers set and communicate clear lesson goals to help pupils understand the success criteria, commit to the learning, and provide the appropriate mix of success and challenge.
- **Structuring and Scaffolding Lessons**– Effective teachers plan and deliver structured lessons which incorporate a series of clear steps and transitions between them, scaffolding learning to build students' knowledge and skills. They support learning by facilitating rather than directing, fostering goal setting and collaboration to develop pupils' autonomy.
- **Explicit Teaching (Direct Instruction)** - Effective teachers use explicit teaching to provide instruction, demonstrate concepts and build pupils' knowledge and skills. In explicit teaching practice, teachers show pupils what to do and how to do it and create opportunities in lessons for pupils to demonstrate understanding and apply the learning.
- **Modelling and Worked Examples**- Effective teachers use worked examples to reduce pupil cognitive load, enabling them to focus on understanding a process which leads to an answer, not the answer itself.
- **Retrieval Practice** – Research has demonstrated time and again that retrieval practice, or reconstructing knowledge by bringing it to mind from your memory, has been shown to improve meaningful learning. (see Roediger et al., 2011) Low stake quizzes, POP TASK, multiple choice tests etc
- **Spaced Practice** - It takes 'three or four experiences involving interaction with relevant information for a new knowledge construct to be created in working memory and then transferred to long-term memory' (Nuthall, 2000, p.93). Spaced practice provides pupils with multiple opportunities to encounter, engage with, and elaborate on new knowledge and skills. It is not simple repetition or drill work. Research demonstrates that deep learning is developed over time via multiple and spaced interactions with new knowledge and concepts.
- **Adaptive Teaching** - Responsive teachers 'check learners understanding systematically, identify misconceptions accurately and provide clear direct feedback. In doing so, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary, without unnecessarily elaborate or differentiated approaches.' Ofsted EIF 2019
- **Feedback –** "Done well, it supports pupil progress, building learning, addressing misunderstandings, and thereby closing the gap between where a pupil is and where the teacher wants them to be" (EEF Oct 21) Feedback informs a pupil and/or teacher about the pupil's performance relative to learning goals. Its purpose is to improve the pupil's learning. Feedback redirects or refocuses the actions of teacher and pupil so the pupil can align effort and activity with a clear outcome that leads to achieving a learning goal. Both teachers and peers can provide formal or informal feedback. It can be oral or written, formative or summative. What really matters are the principles of effective feedback. (EEF, Oct 21)
- **Metacognitive Strategies** - Effective teachers use metacognitive strategies to help pupils develop awareness of their own learning, to self-regulate, and to drive and sustain their motivation to learn.

Metacognitive strategies empower pupils to think about their own thinking more explicitly. Awareness of the learning process enhances control over their own learning.

1. Setting goals	2. Structuring and Scaffolding Lessons	3. Explicit Teaching (Direct Instruction)	4. Modelling & Worked Examples	5. Retrieval	6. Spaced Practice	7. Adaptive Teaching	8. Feedback & Questioning	9. Metacognitive Strategies
Overview Lessons have clear learning intentions with goals that clarify what success looks like. Lesson goals always explain what pupils need to understand, and what they must be able to do. This helps the teacher to plan learning activities, and helps pupils understand what is required.	**Overview** A lesson structure maps teaching and learning that occurs in class. Sound lesson structures reinforce routines, scaffold learning via specific steps/activities. They optimise time on task and classroom climate by using smooth transitions. Planned sequencing of teaching and learning activities stimulates and maintains engagement by linking lesson and unit learning.	**Overview** When teachers adopt explicit teaching practices they clearly show pupils what to do and how to do it. The teacher decides on learning intentions and success criteria, makes them transparent to pupils, and demonstrates them by modelling. The teacher checks for understanding, and at the end of each lesson revisits what was covered and ties it all together (Hattie, 2009).	**Overview** A worked example demonstrates the steps required to complete a task or solve a problem. By scaffolding the learning, worked examples support skill acquisition and reduce a learner's cognitive load. The teacher presents a worked example and explains each step. Later, pupils can use worked examples during independent practice, and to review and embed new knowledge.	**Overview** In retrieval attention is switched to' getting knowledge out of pupils' heads'. Retrieval practice involves pupils recalling something they have learned in the past, a reasonable amount of time after it was initially taught to then, and bringing it back to their minds.	**Overview** Spaced practice provides pupils with multiple opportunities to encounter, engage with, and elaborate on new knowledge and skills. Research demonstrates deep learning develops over time via multiple, spaced interactions with new knowledge and concepts. This may require spacing practice over several days, and using different activities to vary the interactions learners have with new knowledge.	**Overview** Most learners' needs can be met through responsive teaching. Responsive teachers check learners understanding systematically, identify misconceptions accurately and provide clear, direct feedback, responding and adapting their teaching as necessary, without unnecessarily elaborate or differentiated approaches. As pupils gradually master the required skills teachers adjust groupings and levels of support/scaffolding.	**Overview** Feedback informs a pupil and/or teacher about the pupil's performance relative to learning goals. Feedback redirects or refocuses teacher and pupil actions so the pupil can align effort and activity with a clear outcome that leads to achieving a learning goal. Effective questioning yields immediate feedback on pupil understanding, supports assessment, and captures feedback on effectiveness of teaching strategies.	**Overview** Metacognitive strategies teach pupils to think about their own thinking. When pupils become aware of the learning process, they gain control over their learning. Metacognition extends to self-regulation, or managing one's own motivation toward learning. Metacognitive activities can include planning how to approach learning tasks, evaluating progress, and monitoring comprehension.
Key elements Based on assessed pupil needs Goals are presented clearly so pupils know what they are intended to learn Can focus on surface and/or deep learning Challenges pupils relative to their current mastery of the topic Links to explicit assessment criteria	**Key elements** Clear expectations Sequencing and linking learning Clear instructions Clear transitions Scaffolding Questioning/feedback Formative assessment Exit cards	**Key elements** Shared learning intentions Relevant content and activities New content is explicitly introduced and explored Teacher models application of knowledge and skills Worked examples support independent practice Practice and feedback loops uncover and address misunderstandings	**Key elements** Teacher clarifies the learning objective, then demonstrates what pupils need to do to acquire new knowledge and master new skills Teacher presents steps required to arrive at the solution so pupils' cognitive load is reduced and they can focus on the process Pupils practice independently using the worked example as a model	**Key elements** Retrieval practice is a learning tool It is the 'struggle' to remember something that leads to long-term learning Slower, effortful retrieval leads to long-term learning Retrieval should be followed by instant feedback For younger pupils scaffolding retrieval helps	**Key elements** Pupils have time to practice what they have learnt Timely feedback provides opportunities for immediate correction and improvement	**Key elements** Effective strategies include flexible groupings, effective deployment of Teachers and TAs, adapting explicit instruction and scaffolding	**Key elements** Precise, timely, specific, accurate and actionable Use pupil voice to enable pupil feedback about teaching Plan questions in advance for probing, extending, revising and reflecting Questions used as an immediate source of feedback to track progress/understanding	**Key elements** Teaching problem solving Teaching study skills Promotes self-questioning Classroom discussion is an essential feature Uses concept mapping

The Classroom Environment

The classroom environment should be organised and inviting. Each classroom should reflect the learning atmosphere and expectations of a class. Anything in the learning environment that takes away the attention from the subject material is hindering learning.

Where resources are used frequently, they should be stored so that they are easy to access and labelled where appropriate. The room should be clutter free, easy to navigate and equipment and resources should be kept in good order. All children must be encouraged to look after and contribute towards the management of their own rooms, ensuring that they are in a good enough order to begin learning each session. Resources should be easy for adults and children to locate and access.

Displays have to serve 2 purposes: to inform and educate or to celebrate. When planning a preparing a display or learning wall then the following acronym of **PART** should be considered:

Purpose - what will the children learn from the display and how does this relate to the golden nuggets (key concepts) on the Medium Term Plans/Knowledge organisers

Accessible - Can it be used/seen by children? Is it big enough? In their eyeline? Can they physically get to it? Consider the traffic implications for anyone seated near the display and whether this will affect their learning experience.

Referred to - make sure it is regularly referred to in teaching. It should be a resource in lessons. Avoid it becoming wallpaper and change/update it regularly.

Time - consider how valuable your time is. A display should be appealing but not a work of art. These are fluid resources/working walls. It should reflect key aspects of the Knowledge Organisers and not take hours to prepare - that hard work is already done.

Every classroom should have an inviting and well-organised reading area. They should be in good condition and age appropriate. Children must be encouraged to look after books and treat them carefully. Books should be clearly displayed and accessible. Books to reflect topics or specific subjects should be displayed, alongside any displays or work, to foster engagement and to provoke interest. The value and importance of books should be reflected in the environment. Reading widely throughout the curriculum, is vital for introducing new concepts and vocabulary. The use of high quality texts enables subject specific vocabulary development and for children to have something to hand their new knowledge onto.

In order to emphasise that the classroom environment is one to be treated with respect, any table top visual prompts or mats should be refreshed as they get worn and tattered.

In order for teaching and learning to be focused, reduce the 'noise' around the whiteboard areas and minimise the content of presentations to avoid cognitive overload. Simplicity – less is more.

REVIEW

What This Looks Like At St Mary and St Peter:

The Teaching and Learning Policy will be reviewed every two years – or sooner if necessary - by the SLT and Governors.

Review November 2027