



ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY, ASCOT VALE CONTEMPORARY LEARNING POLICY

July 2016

RATIONALE:

St Mary's School has a strong commitment to child safety as is reflected in our Vision Statement: *"Each child has the right to feel happy, safe and valued"*. We continually strive to ensure that every child is safe from harm including all forms of abuse. We exercise zero tolerance to abuse.

We the parish community of St. Mary's believe that learning is a lifelong journey, through which we learn to know, learn to be, learn to do, learn to reflect and learn to live together. We believe that assessment, teaching and learning are interlinked and are each integral to the learning cycle.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

As learners, we learn best when:

- ◆ We feel loved, secure and valued
- ◆ We are in a stimulating environment
- ◆ We are interested, motivated and challenged
- ◆ Our individual needs and learning styles are catered for
- ◆ We recognise that we are responsible for our own learning
- ◆ We have an insight into our own learning
- ◆ We are active participants in our learning
- ◆ Goals are clear and achievable
- ◆ The new learning is linked to prior learning
- ◆ The learning is broken down into manageable parts
- ◆ We are aware that prior knowledge and experiences can help future learning
- ◆ We are given the opportunity to share our successes, challenges and set future goals
- ◆ We receive feedback and are given the opportunity to reflect on our learning
- ◆ We use a growth mindset as against a fixed mindset

As learners, we learn through:

- ◆ A range of meaningful experiences
- ◆ A variety of interactions
- ◆ A range of strategies which suit individual abilities, learning styles, needs and interests
- ◆ Assessment which is embedded in learning and is relevant, practical and in context
- ◆ Self-reflection
- ◆ Setting learning goals

IMPLICATIONS

Therefore, teaching and assessment at St. Mary's prioritizes welfare and relationships by:

- ◆ Valuing each individual
- ◆ Promoting and valuing open communication within the community

- ◆ Embracing the cultures that make up our community
- ◆ Welcoming and nurturing new arrivals
- ◆ Connecting with learners
- ◆ Providing opportunities for social interaction
- ◆ Being aware of school's policies and practices

Examples of strategies used to achieve this include

- ◆ Taking time for individuals
- ◆ Listening to all sides
- ◆ Using interpreters to assist in communication
- ◆ Community notices in the weekly newsletter
- ◆ Whole school celebration days
- ◆ Regular review of policy and practices

Therefore, teaching and assessment at St. Mary's happens in a safe environment by:

- ◆ Fostering gospel values
- ◆ Promoting a positive relationship between school and home
- ◆ Incorporating cultural perspectives that acknowledge and value customs and traditions from the cultural backgrounds within our community
- ◆ Being aware of individual needs
- ◆ Encouraging risk-taking
- ◆ Fostering independence and responsibility

Examples of strategies used to achieve this include:

- ◆ P.S.G. meetings
- ◆ Process of referrals
- ◆ Teaching social skills
- ◆ Acknowledging cultural perspectives in planning and implementing learning experiences
- ◆ Kindergarten visits
- ◆ Level masses
- ◆ School community social activities
- ◆ Inviting parents into the school for a variety of reasons
- ◆ Prompt and honest correspondence with parents and teachers
- ◆ Respecting the rights of all stake holders
- ◆ Acknowledging and making allowances for individual circumstances
- ◆ Promoting and valuing student input into decision-making
- ◆ Annual publication of yearly parent handbook

Therefore, teaching and assessment at St. Mary's caters for learning by:

- ◆ Implementing a variety of teaching strategies including Learning Intentions and Success Criteria.
- ◆ Using a range of assessment tools, that address all learning styles, throughout the various stages in the learning process
- ◆ Regularly collecting, recording and analysing data at individual and group levels
- ◆ Incorporating (ongoing), formative assessment and monitoring to inform planning and teaching
- ◆ Determining learners' stages of development through assessment
- ◆ Planning and teaching to address individual needs
- ◆ Establishing clear, attainable goals
- ◆ Developing skills, strategies and use of tools to assist us in our learning
- ◆ Developing individual and group education plans as required

- ◆ Building and maintaining a holistic profile of individual progress
- ◆ Providing opportunities for reflective practices and feedback
- ◆ Assessing the effectiveness of programmes, tools and strategies
- ◆ Committing to ongoing professional development which enables inclusive and informed practice to meet all needs e.g. E.S.L., special needs

Examples of strategies used to achieve these include:

- ◆ Small group focused teaching
- ◆ Commitment to “whole, small” lesson structure
- ◆ Inquiry learning – Kath Murdoch and Lane Clark strategies/philosophies
- ◆ Using outside agencies
- ◆ Student assessment folders
- ◆ Student and teacher learning/reflection journals
- ◆ Professional Action Learning Teams
- ◆ Assessment schedule
- ◆ CLaSS
- ◆ NAPLAN testing
- ◆ A compulsory ‘Learning Conversation’ with parents and child highlighting the ‘Celebration of Learning’ folio.
- ◆ Individual Learning Plans
- ◆ Programme Support Group Meetings

Therefore, teaching and assessment at St. Mary’s shares and celebrates learning by:

- ◆ Having opportunities to articulate learning
- ◆ Public performances and presentations
- ◆ Providing opportunities to publish learning

Examples of strategies used to achieve these include:

- ◆ Award presentations
- ◆ Displaying student work/learnings (assemblies, notice-boards, plays, displays)
- ◆ (Learning journals) Celebration of Learning folios
- ◆ Publications (class / individual books / school website / intranet)
- ◆ Articulating learnings, throughout the learning process, such as during share time
- ◆ Biennial Musical Production
- ◆ Weekly assemblies and Class Masses

Therefore, teaching and assessment at St. Mary’s shares responsibility for learning by:

- ◆ Acknowledging the learner as pivotal to the whole process
- ◆ Involving the learner in the direction of the learning
- ◆ Enabling the learner to set personal learning goals
- ◆ Formulating rubrics and criteria
- ◆ Offering open-ended tasks
- ◆ Developing tools and strategies for reflection
- ◆ Utilizing a variety of learning media

Examples of strategies used to achieve these include

- ◆ Providing opportunities for negotiated outcomes/goals
- ◆ Using a series line to plot learning and to encourage ownership of learning
- ◆ Parent Information meetings
- ◆ Using rubrics to assess learning and set goals
- ◆ Self-evaluation

What makes a good Learning Intention

“Learners learn best when they understand what they are learning and what is expected of them.”

- **Set the Learning Intention in Context.**
 - Make the learning intention clear and link it to the big picture i.e. the purpose and context of the learning.
 - Sharing the learning intention and success criteria with young people is a very powerful tool that can reach out to all learners.
 - Link the LI to the overall introduction to the E/Os.

- **Use SMART Learning Intentions**
 - Small, measurable, achievable, realistic and time limited.
 - Keep LI focused on what will be learned by engaging with the task e.g.- “we are learning to write a mystery story, using mysterious phrases and suspense”.

- **Use child friendly Language**
 - Keep the LI clear and meaningful in language that is appropriate for the age and stage of the young people.
 - Skills and knowledge based LIs are easier to create than concept based LIs.
 - Technical terms can be used and the younger people become familiar with them the more they can cope.

- **Use words associated with Learning**
 - Clear Learning Intentions should help pupils focus not just on the task and activity but also the learning. Useful LIS may start with-
 - “we are learning to...”
 - “we are learning to understand...”
 - “we will learn to think about...”
 - “we are learning to be able to ...”

- **Display the Learning Intention for the Visual Learner**
 - Ensuring the LI is on display while pupils are on task keeps the learning focused. It reinforces the purpose of the learning and pupils can easily revisit the LI.
 - It is useful to make the LI accessible e.g.-
 - Pupils may write it in a jotter at the start of a piece of work
 - Add to a card, learning log or workbook
 - Display on a whiteboard or a poster

What makes good Success Criteria.

- **Linking Learning Intention and Success Criteria**
 - Good SC should be closely linked to the LI.
 - Continue to focus on the learning rather than the doing.
 - They should refer to specific features of the work that will be assessed.

- **Good Success Criteria**
 - Use words that emphasise the learning, knowledge and understanding, thinking, skills.
 - It's not always about an end product but the process. Don't focus on a list of end goals.

- Don't enumerate eg. 10 pieces of evidence.
- **Modelling Success Criteria.**
 - Learners need a good idea of what a good piece of work looks like.
 - Share the standard by using exemplification of different types of work linking these to the Success Criteria.
 - Illustrate the standards expected.
 - Displays of work can be used highlighting the links to the S.C. e.g.
 - “this is a good piece of work because...”
 - “this is an excellent piece of work because...”
- **Involving young people in creating the Success Criteria.**
 - Involving young people in the process of identifying S.C. when assessing their response to a specific Learning Intention helps them to engage better in their own learning.
 - Engaging with the learner through dialogue and discussion, e.g. asking how they know they have achieved success in their learning, is formative.
 - Where appropriate it may be worth negotiating suitable S.C. with the pupils.
- **Skills related Success Criteria.**
 - Again modelling the quality of the learning linked to the S.C. is very useful.
 - Using cooperative teaching, observing and highlighting the skills involved.
 - “what will a good one look like, feel like, sound like...”
- **Success Criteria and Self-Assessment Checklist.**
 - Some learning can lend itself to Success Criteria checklists.
 - When young people are trained in the skills of peer and self-assessment this may be useful when assessing the learning at that point in time and informing the next steps.
 - Young people can use summative assessment in a formative way to make judgements on the success of their learning.
 - However, developing descriptors that are linked to levels of success may be more useful.
- **Success Criteria and Targets**
 - Using the term target can sometimes overshadow the process of the learning.
 - Using terms such as the following may be more meaningful –
 - My next step is-
 - I aim to-
 - I am working towards-
 - I could-
 - Don't expect young people to know immediately how to embark on target setting. Young people may need help in negotiating and working towards a target. A target is an end point. The important part is the learning journey- sharing the criteria for success, guidance, feedback, reassurance helps with achievement.
 - However, skills based learning and group work can lend itself to target setting.
- **Personalised Success Criteria.**
 - Some young people require, through dialogue and discussion and feedback, more help in setting individualized learning goals and success criteria. Including the pupil's voice is important e.g. negotiation through dialogue built around effective

questioning about the learning, trying things out, looking for connections, asking why? All leads to a more inclusive approach.

➤ **Success Criteria and Skills**

- At times it is difficult to distinguish the skills from the task and the knowledge based activities. Learning Intention and Success Criteria are designed to share not just what the young people will do but what they will learn and how they will recognize success.
- It's useful to think also about the difference between the activity set and the skills needed to complete it. This helps to keep the focus on the learning by engaging with the task.
- Build the skills into your planning.
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See Principles and Practice documents for more information on assessment.

YEAR LEVEL	LEARNING INTENTION	SUCCESS CRITERIA
F-2	We are Learning to: (WALT)	
3-4	Our Learning Intention is:	I can:
5-6	To use... To be able to... To understand how...	

Growth Mindset

Intelligence is a quality that can be changed and developed (Dweck, 2008).

“The harder I have to work at something, the more effort I put into something, the better I’ll be at it”

By having a growth mindset, I...

- *Focus on effort, struggle, persistence despite setbacks*
- *Choose difficult tasks*
- *Focus on Strategies*
- *Reflect on different strategies that work and don’t work*
- *Focus on Learning and improving*
- *Seek challenges*
- *Work hard*

EVALUATION:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s four year review cycle.