



# THE MINSTER NURSERY AND INFANT SCHOOL

SCHOOL OF INSPIRATION

DETERMINATION HONOUR BELIEVE

PREPARING FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE WITH INNOVATIVE AND EXCITING LEARNING

# Teaching and Learning Policy

Reviewed on: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Signed.....Chair

To be reviewed on or before end of November 2024



**WE ARE A VOLUNTARY AIDED (VA) SCHOOL WITHIN THE DIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK**

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## **Fruits of the Spirit**

The Fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) underpin all that we do and we weave these fruits into the fabric of our school ensuring that they underpin all of our policies.

## **Biblical Underpinning**

‘Let all that you do be done in love’ Cor 16:14

We are determined to provide a Heaven to Earth experience for all in our school (1 Samuel: 16-17). We believe that everyone has an untold potential for a bright future developed with us. We honour one another to ensure the best outcome in every way possible for everyone (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

## **Our Core Framework**

Vision: School of Inspiration

Mission: Preparing for a bright future with innovative and exciting Learning.

Values: Determination, Honour and Believe.

## **Key Purpose of This Policy**

This policy outlines our Heaven to Earth curriculum and provides theoretical underpinning to explain mostly how we do what we do. Every member of staff’s values, hopes and aspirations for our children must align with this policy.

This policy mostly addresses the way learning takes place here at The Minster Nursery and Infant School- the relationship processes through which great learning takes place.

## **What is Learning?**

Learning is acquiring new knowledge, understanding and skills through varied opportunities, experiences and play.

Learning happens best when it is exciting, inspiring, creative, open-ended; when it includes risk-taking, rehearsing, remembering, choosing, enjoyment, being successful, breaking barriers and bridging ideas in order to thrive in different contexts, including the future, so that we are prepared for life’s challenges with confidence and independence.

### How we need to be

This policy also refers, in general terms, to the content of our Heaven to Earth curriculum. The content is the subjects, the topics, the skills and so on (the 'what' in the EYFS and National Curriculum).

The processes (the 'how') explain the powerful effect of our professionals who know how to enable others to succeed, innovate and flourish. This policy introduces the theories that make our successful relationships intentional, consistent and successful.

Please also read our Marking and Feedback Policy. More detail on the coverage and pacing of taught skills and concepts for each year group can be found on our website.

All of our staff are expected to align their values and behaviours to the Core Framework values above and the knowledge and theories outlined below.

This policy enables all stakeholders to have a deep understanding of how children learn best AND how that translates in to our daily practice. We present our **Key Operating Principles**, our **Influencers/Inspirers** and our resulting **Offer**.

### Key Operating Principles

- Pedagogical excellence-including AfL and child development
- Play is important
- Integrity-doing what is right, not what is easy.
- Honesty-non-defensive, collegiate approach
- Do no harm-gentle strength, safe boundaries, compassion
- Authenticity-being 'real' and enabling others to do the same

We give our children the ability to see themselves as successful learners. We know that children who are good talkers become good writers.

We know that our children need to love reading because:

*'reading enjoyment is more important for children's educational success than their family's socio-economic status.'* OECD 2002

### Influencers/Inspirers

#### **The Word**

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

#### **Vygotsky-Zone of Proximal Development**

The idea that children can only experience meaningful learning if the curriculum offer starts at the developmental stage in which the child operates. It is only from this place that educators can provide meaningful learning opportunities to enable the child to learn

and grow in the next level. This theory means that we need to be mindful when we consider 'Age Related Expectation' and the associated pressure to rush some children to achieve this.

### **Carl Rogers-Core Conditions ('On Becoming a Person')**

Carl Rogers was the main founder of Person-Centred Therapy. He showed that people thrive and flourish when they are with facilitators who exhibit the Core Conditions:

1. Congruence (authenticity)
2. Empathy
3. Unconditional Positive Regard

### **Bolman and Deal-The Affirming Leader**

The Affirming Leader has a positive outlook and understands the importance of relationships and belonging. This type of leader wants to create a collaborative and collegiate way of working in which people know they are important and valued. In doing so, members of the class or staff can grow and flourish.

### **Brene Brown-vulnerability and shame ('Daring Greatly')**

Brene Brown has researched shame and vulnerability for more than a decade. She defines 'shame resilient' cultures in work and family life that enable people to take personal risks to share and contribute their creativity.

### **Haim Ginott**

#### **The Decisive Element**

"I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration, I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis is escalated or de-escalated, and a person is humanized or de-humanized. If we treat people as they are, we make them worse. If we treat people as they ought to be, we help them become what they are capable of becoming."

### **Bronfenbrenner-Ecological Systems Theory**

Bronfenbrenner recognised that the child sits in the middle of layers of concentric circles of environmental and familial influence-all of which influence the child's development and how they play and function in school.

For example, the child's closest family will influence how s/he plays. The friends and teachers' decisions will influence how s/he plays. The policies of local councils (through housing and education perhaps) will influence how s/he plays. Government policy will influence how s/he plays.

We have seen this in the effect of a global pandemic, which has likely affected every family across the world in one way or another.

### **Jean Piaget-Cognitive Development Theory**

Piaget recognised that infants play differently at different ages and were able to benefit from the natural opportunities that arise in play situations. These range from learning 'cause and effect' (e.g. moving a shaker to make a noise), learning about their senses, expressing themselves, using imagination, imitating, testing out and consolidating what has been learnt from others, collaborating, developing language to solving problems and negotiating rules. Children also learn to assess and take calculated risks; trial and evaluation.

### **D. W. Winnicott-paediatrician and psychoanalyst**

Winnicott believed that play is essential for human beings throughout their lives and he saw play as the 'work' children had to do to become adults. Winnicott saw the creativity of playing as a facilitation of mental growth and therefore, health. Play is used in all forms of communication by adults and by children. Indeed, throughout our lives, we play creatively even in our conversations. Winnicott also recognised the potential of play as a therapeutic tool not only in classic psychotherapy but can also through other forms of communication like art and drama.

According to Winnicott this creative act is essential for the infant in the process of individuating from his mother and identifying himself as different from her (Winnicott, 1971). The next stage in the development of play is the one where the child learns to play alone, but in the presence of someone. 'Responsible adults must be available when children play; but this does not mean that the responsible person need enter into the child's playing' (Winnicott, 1971,p50). In reaching this stage of development, the child achieves something which is fundamental to human development: the capacity to be alone.

Play, according to Winnicott can, in common with art and religious practice, unify and integrate the human personality. It is through play that the child is able to complete the picture of himself as a unified human being. It is only through playing that a child or indeed an adult is able to be creative and use the whole of his personality.

### **Carol Dweck-Growth Mindset**

Carol Dweck conducted research in to the effects of praising children for their efforts and praising them for being clever or smart. She found that children who were praised for their efforts were much more open-minded about their ability to solve problems. The children praised for being 'clever' were less likely to have a go at solving problems as they risked disappointment because, after all, they have been told they are clever and so do not want to prove that wrong.

Carol realised that children are more likely to do well if they have a Growth Mindset. This means that they believe that if they practise enough or find the right resources, they can be successful. People with a fixed mindset believe that there are things they will never be able to do and so there is little point in trying.

### **Guy Claxton-Building Learning Power**

Guy Claxton believes that children benefit from understanding the different ways in which we learn. He believes that our Learning Powers are like muscles: they get stronger the more we exercise them. Learning Powers include: imagining, managing distractions, imitation, noticing, perseverance, making links, collaboration, distilling. Guy Claxton believes that children benefit from developing the language to explain how they learn best to help them become successful learners.

### **Shirley Clarke-Assessment for Learning**

Shirley Clarke has written much about Assessment for Learning. AfL strategies include:

- Individual use of whiteboards and pens so that children can show the teacher their responses and the teacher can identify misconceptions straight away
- Comparing two pieces of work; one very good example and one that could be a lot better. This enables the children to understand WMG = 'What Makes Good' and EBI = 'Even Better If'
- Creating success criteria 'with' the children by looking at successful evidence of learning, rather than 'for' or 'in front of' the children
- Spending a few minutes assessing what the children already know at the beginning of a lesson or unit of lessons and what they know at the end. Children can then talk about what they have learned
- Finding out what children want to learn. Encouraging children to be curious and to formulate their own questions.

## Our Offer

Our nursery and reception classes follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. In Year 1, children begin to access the National Curriculum in a 'reception' style. Teachers introduce a more formal style throughout the year depending on when the children are ready. In Year 2, the children follow the National Curriculum in a more formal way to prepare them for learning in Key Stage 3.

All year groups benefit from Forest School sessions within the school grounds. Our teachers report that this has a positive impact on children's enjoyment of learning, listening, problem-solving skills and ability to work collaboratively.

All year groups use Read, Write Inc phonics scheme.

All year groups have regular Voices Foundation singing sessions.

The teaching of cursive handwriting starts as soon as children are ready to start forming letters in EYFS and throughout Key Stage 1.

We follow the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education RE Syllabus enriched by the Understanding Christianity Project.

There is flexibility between groups organised according to ability to enable all children to experience success and challenge in learning.

Teaching in all year groups encourages children to make connections between learning in different subjects to maximise cross-curricular links to deepen the learning experience.

In all year groups, pupil voice is sought so that the learning experience is aligned with what inspires, motivates and excites our children most.

All of our teachers know that children learn best when they are motivated by curriculum content, have relationships they want to invest in and are kept engaged and focussed through efficient use of time and high expectations.

All year groups seek to develop children's stamina for learning and resilience to overcome barriers-both educationally and socially.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Relationships and Health Education Policy, which provides more detail on the following themes:

We aim for the values underpinning our RHE (Relationships and Health Education) curriculum to be reflected in our whole school ethos.

**"Every person in the school community is a child of God: so at the heart of Christian distinctiveness in schools is an upholding of the worth of each person." (Valuing All God's Children, Church of England 2017 p11)**

- To support pupils' mental health by providing diverse representations of families, so that all children are included and no child feels like an outsider.
- To provide opportunities and have high expectations for children from the Early Years, to acquire positive values and social skills in order to develop into confident and empathic people.

- To provide a safe framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- To use pupil and parent voice to guide the curriculum
- To help pupils understand the importance of health and hygiene
- To create a positive culture around issues of relationships
- To help our children recognise safe and unsafe scenarios.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Our teachers have worked together to take and adapt the best parts of “Planning in the Moment with Young Children: A Practical Guide for Early Years Practitioners and Parents” by Anna Ephgrave.

Through our continuous provision, children make their own learning choices within carefully organised indoor and outdoor enabling environments. The learning choices available are constructed by teachers and teaching assistants. The activities are designed to inspire, motivate and promote the deep and meaningful learning of the skills needed for their development. Children are able to follow their interests in learning. This encourages motivation, creativity, autonomy and stamina for learning.

Adults focus on high-quality interactions with children using Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Wellbeing (SSTEW Scales) to scaffold and extend children’s learning.

We provide open, ‘high ceiling’ challenges and learning opportunities for children to access at their level of development providing scope for further extension and challenge.

We provide opportunities for active, hands-on, experiential learning; building on the Characteristics of an Effective Learner.

We use our direct teaching time (carpet time) to focus on Understanding, Listening and Attention to model and provide opportunities to develop spoken language. We focus on the children’s interests and use a range of questioning.

We believe that children learn best through stories and include these in teaching all areas of the curriculum. We link key vocabulary to these stories and teach this directly to support children’s language development.

We expect children to talk and write in sentences and we model this to them at all times.

We champion the children’s stories through Helicopter Stories-scribing their storytelling and acting this out as a class. This supports language development and inspires writing. Children are strongly encouraged to write their stories independently enabling them to see their own progress, which in turn, encourages creativity and imagination.

We have a Nurture Group called Ducklings. Ducklings is there for children with gaps within their development, who cannot yet access the curriculum within a whole-class setting. We appreciate that there is a significant difference between the pupil : adult ratio funding available in nurseries, and what is affordable in reception classes in England. We understand that this adjustment can be a challenging transition for a significant number of children.



We run the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI), which has a focus on building a strong foundation for later academic success.

In teaching phonics, the foundations for phonics are built in nursery through song, rhymes and sound recognition.

We follow Read, Write Inc phonics scheme of instruction. Children are taught in groups streamed across the year group from the second half of the autumn term. This learning is reinforced in reading and writing activities as well as in other learning opportunities as it arises.

We apply all the above knowledge, theories and skills that we, as professionals, have developed to model and promote optimal Attitude to Learning. We create a respectful, safe and positive learning environment taking in to consideration all the influences in children's lives. Our children know they belong here.

We celebrate children's mistakes as well as their successes. We praise effort, persistence, determination and willingness to try new ideas (Growth Mindset). We model making mistakes and the best responses to overcome hurdles.

We create an environment with firm boundaries where children feel physically and emotionally safe and secure. Children are guided in our expectation that we relate to each other by honouring each other with kindness, empathy and compassion to be cooperative learners. We support children to resolve conflicts mostly through appropriate questioning to enable children to think deeply to see that they often already have the answers they seek.

We use the language of emotions to label and own our feelings in order to promote well-being and respect.

## **Year 1**

Our teachers have taken and adapted the best parts of "Moving on to Key Stage 1: Improving Transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage" by Julie Fisher.

At the start of Year 1, a significant number of children are simply not ready to embark on the National Curriculum. During the Autumn term of Year 1, Continuous Provision enables children to achieve the Early Learning Goal. There are more structured learning opportunities for those children who are ready for the National Curriculum.

Children have personalised (or group) 'I can...' targets in their exercise books for English, maths, science and R.E. (our core subjects). Our children are aware of their targets and enjoy discussing their progress with others.

To support the teaching of grammar, we use Nelson Grammar.

Children benefit from a varied range of learning opportunities through themed art days, Many Cultures One Family week and Black History Month.

Foundation subjects (history, geography, art, design and technology, music, PE) are taught in alignment with the National Curriculum programmes of study. We maximise learning through making connections to previous learning and to other subjects where these connections arise naturally.

For teaching Religious Education, we follow the Southwark Diocese scheme of work, enhanced by using the Understanding Christianity Project. In Year 1, children learn about Judaism and Christianity.

P.E. is led by teachers or by Premier Sports coaches. Children also benefit from sports coaching at lunchtimes.

Year 1 continue to value the importance of play. Play is an essential part of child development. Children communicate and learn so much through play. Their motivation for learning increases through play.

In Year 1, children benefit from outdoor learning areas as well as indoor, small world play and investigative play.

Year 1 follow the 'White Rose' maths strategies of taking children through stages of concrete, pictorial and abstract concepts to build secure knowledge and skills. Teachers are flexible in their planning and will adjust the timings of units to maximise cross-curricular links. For example, teaching about coins is moved to when Money Matters is being taught as part of our Relationships and Health Education.

In year 1, children develop a more secure understanding of how they learn best through Assessment for Learning strategies and being involved in conversations about Learning Powers.

Children continue to benefit from Read, Write Inc phonics instruction in streamed groups which are assessed every half term and children change groups accordingly.

Children's music is delivered through the Voices Foundation singing and from a specialist music teacher.

## **Year 2**

In year 2, we follow the National Curriculum for all subjects. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum rich in awe, wonder and inspiration. We aim to ensure that the vast majority of our children are exceptionally well-prepared for the next Key Stage.

Our staff create environments that feel safe and secure where children experience positive and caring interactions.

We provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential. We ensure the content is differentiated to provide challenge, success with full access to the curriculum.

Children have the opportunity to work in varied ways; in groups, in mixed-ability pairs or individually. Tasks set are designed to engage children by following their interests.

In maths, a Mastery approach is used and there is a strong focus on concrete, pictorial and abstract development of knowledge and skills which is accessible for all abilities.

Our teachers search out inspirational texts and other media as starting points. Teachers model adventurous choices of vocabulary to support our language-rich environments. There is a strong emphasis on reading.

