



The
Ursuline
Preparatory School Ilford

CURRICULUM, TEACHING & LEARNING POLICY

(September 2023)

The School Mission Statement

To live and learn in harmony,
Caring for each other;
Treating everybody as a sister and a brother;
Reflecting Christ's actions and His message too,
By striving for excellence in all that we do

Persons responsible: Head Teacher and staff

Date adopted: November 2006

Most recent policy Review: September 2023

Date of next policy review: September 2024

1. HOW THE POLICY WAS DEVELOPED

- This document in line with our School Mission Statement is a statement of the aims, principles, and strategies for teaching and learning at The Ursuline Preparatory School Ilford. It lays the foundations for the whole curriculum, both formal and informal, and forms the context in which all other policy statements should be read.
- It was developed through a process of consultation with teaching staff.
- It was approved by the Governing Body in October 2000 and has subsequently been reviewed at regular intervals.
- This policy will next be reviewed in the Autumn of 2024. A schedule for the review of this and all other, policy documents is set out in the school's policy review matrix.

2. INTENTIONS

The Teaching for Learning Policy summarises how we offer a curriculum which is broad and balanced, and meets the requirements of the Education Reform Act relating to the National Curriculum and Religious Education and collective worship.

Children in Nursery and Reception classes follow the EYFS framework (September 2014; Update 2023) and the corresponding seven areas of learning and development.

In KS1 and KS2 the subjects of the National Curriculum are studied. Whilst our curriculum relates to the National Curriculum it does not follow it explicitly. In addition, Spanish is studied in all classes each week. PSHE is taught explicitly and through RE lessons and across the other subject areas where appropriate.

3. AIMS

Our aims for teaching and learning are that all children will:

- aspire to have the highest expectations in terms of their academic achievement, aesthetic appreciation and spiritual awareness;
- develop a responsible and independent attitude towards work and toward their roles in society;

- be tolerant and understanding with respect for the rights, views and property of others.

4. PRINCIPLES of TEACHING AND LEARNING

We see teaching and learning as a process of cooperative team work and welcome and encourage the involvement of parents and others in the community.

The promotion of Fundamental British Values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faith and beliefs is embedded in the school Mission Statement, within the school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies, within class discussions as part of general curriculum teaching, specifically within PSHE including educational visits and workshops and in the proceedings of the school council.

All members of the school community (teaching and support staff, parents, pupils and governors) work towards the school's aims by:

- esteeming children as individuals, and respecting their rights, values and beliefs;
- fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community;
- providing a well ordered environment in which all are fully aware of behavioural expectations;
- offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life. We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination which may form barriers to learning. We recognise and celebrate the importance of different cultures in our learning community, encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviour and work;
- working as a Christian team where the spirit of Christ is present in all aspects of school life.

Teachers work towards school aims by:

- providing a challenging, stimulating and differentiated programme of study, designed to enable all children to reach the highest standards of personal achievement (see appendix i; Differentiation);
- showing children the connections between what they are learning now and what they have already learned;
- whenever possible, relating what is taught to the children's own experience;
- sharing learning intentions and outcomes with the children;
- recognising and being constantly aware of the needs of each individual child according to ability and aptitude;
- ensuring that learning is progressive and continuous;
- being good role models - punctual, well prepared and organised;
- maintaining an up to date knowledge of current good practice and the National Curriculum;
- having a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise;

- establishing links with the local community, to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life;
- working collaboratively with a shared philosophy and commonality of practice;
- informing parents promptly of any concerns and working in partnership with them;
- holding 'Meet the teacher' class meetings at the start of each academic year;
- running workshops for parents (e.g. maths calculations workshops, homework and study skills);
- running workshops for children (e.g. CAFOD).

Pupils work towards the school's aims by:

- attending school in good health maintained by adequate diet, exercise and sleep;
- attending school regularly, avoiding term time holidays;
- being punctual and ready to begin lessons on time;
- being organised, bringing necessary kit, taking letters home promptly, returning reading books regularly;
- conducting themselves in an orderly manner in line with the expected codes of discipline; taking increasing responsibility for their own learning.

Parents work towards the school's aim by:

- ensuring that children attend school in good health, regularly and punctually;
- being realistic about their children's abilities and offering encouragement and praise;
- participating in discussion about their child's progress and attainment;
- ensuring early contact with school to discuss matters which affect their child's happiness, progress and behaviour;
- providing support for the discipline within the school and supporting their child's class teacher;
- giving due importance to homework, hearing reading and assisting in learning of tables and spellings;
- allowing their own children to take increasing responsibility as they progress throughout the school.

5. EQUAL ACCESS AND OUTCOME

The needs of SEND and EAL children are identified, assessed and the curriculum modified and teaching is differentiated to meet specific needs (see SEND policy). Individual plans are drawn up where appropriate by teachers liaising with the SENDCo who may provide extra support in the classroom from support staff and voluntary helpers.

We believe that the needs of gifted and talented children can best be met through effective and challenging differentiated teaching (see appendix i).

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and Safety issues are the responsibility of all who work in the school. The Health and Safety representative is Richard Skinner, the premises manager, and all problems should be reported to him. Key issues should be reported to the Head Teacher/Bursar.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

Our curriculum is predominately organised on a single subject basis within which there may be some topic based work links and cross-curricular links are sought and encouraged where appropriate.

In the Nursery and Reception classes the EYFS framework (September 2014; Update 2023) is followed as a foundation and also children's interests are followed and developed. On a daily basis, the programme is reviewed so that the children are stretched. There is a balance of small group activities and one to one adult focus activities, following the principles of child initiated play and the free flow system.

In the rest of the school, whole class teaching, individual and group work are used where appropriate. Flexible grouping arrangements are encouraged.

There is specialist teaching throughout KS1 and KS2 in PE, Spanish and Music and in swimming for KS2.

Support staff are an invaluable resource in our school and liaise closely with class teachers to support their work with the children in the classroom.

- Volunteer helpers/parents assist in the classroom, on outings and visits.
- Students on work experience are accepted into the school, and appropriate standards of dress and conduct are expected.
- We are developing our own schemes of work, with reference to the National Curriculum. Where appropriate, published schemes are used to support and supplement the teaching of core and foundation subjects.
- Everyone who works in our school is expected to treat in confidence anything heard or seen pertaining to individual pupils or members of staff.

Homework is considered to be a valuable element of the teaching and learning process therefore:

- children are encouraged to work at home on a regular basis (see Homework Policy);
- it is expected that all children will read at home daily and/or share a book with their parents;
- children will have multiplication tables (Year 2+) and spellings to learn at home;
- children who have made insufficient effort in class time may be asked to complete the work at home/break-time;
- extra homework tasks will be given to children in Years 5 and 6 to help prepare them for public examinations and life at secondary school;
- further practice in basic skills (e.g. handwriting) may be set at the discretion of class teachers after negotiating with parents.

We encourage children increasingly to take control of their own learning and take pride in their work.

- Opportunities are provided for investigative work.
- Children are encouraged to communicate their findings in a variety of ways.
- Opportunities are provided for children to be involved in decision making.

Excellence in work and behaviour is rewarded with house points, which are collected and announced weekly in assembly and in individual classes with Class Dojos.

Excellence is celebrated in display and performance wherein:

- each child is given an opportunity to have work of a high standard (i.e. their best effort) displayed at some time in the school year;
- sustained effort including drafting and reworking is encouraged to enhance standards;
- school events such as assemblies, concerts and drama are seen as opportunities for all pupils (not just the most gifted and talented) to demonstrate their best performance;
- pupils are encouraged to believe that any exhibited work (performance and displays) should represent their highest standards of personal achievement.

8. CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION

Planning is a process in which all teachers are involved wherein:

- long term, medium and short term work plans are drawn up by individual teachers. These are monitored by the head teacher and/or the senior leadership team;
- regular staff meetings are used to discuss various aspects of the curriculum and ensure consistency of approach and standards;
- class teachers are responsible for maintaining up to date children's records.

Subject co-ordinators have a variety of roles. They:

- take the lead in policy development and production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in their subject throughout the school;
- produce a curriculum development plan to be discussed annually with the SLT/head teacher and staff;
- support colleagues in their development of detailed work plans, the implementation of the scheme of work and in the assessment and record keeping activities;
- closely monitor pupils' progress in their subjects and advise the head teacher on action needed;
- take responsibility for the purchase, according to any allocated budget, and organisation of central resources for their subjects;
- may be given release time to allow them to support colleagues in the classroom;
- are expected to keep up to date through reading and attending relevant courses.

Feedback is used to ensure that pupils are included in their own learning journey (see Marking Guidelines in the Assessment and Record Keeping Policy).

Effective feedback:

- aims to help children learn, not to find fault, and comments aim to be positive and constructive;
- is often done while a task is being carried out through discussion between child and teacher;
- is used sensitively and with discretion so that the child can assimilate a certain number of corrections at one time – this may vary accordingly to age and ability;
- may occasionally be blunt in order to draw attention to work which is far below acceptable standards for the child in question.

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 the child has learned and what therefore should be the next stage in their learning. Formative assessment is mostly carried out informally by teachers in the course of their teaching. Suitable tasks for assessment include:

- small group discussion perhaps in the context of a practical task;
- short tests which may be written or oral;
- specific assignments for individual pupils;
- individual discussions in which children are encouraged to appraise their own work and progress.

Cross phase continuity is ensured by:

- meeting with parents before their child starts in Nursery/Reception;
- various meetings with parents in the run-up to high school applications;
- visits to secondary schools by Year 6 pupils;
- transfer of pupils records of progress and summative assessment results.

9. RESOURCING

Classroom resources are the responsibility of the classroom teachers who ensure that:

- there is a range of appropriate, accessible and labelled resources available from which the pupils can select materials suitable for the task in hand;
- all children know where resources are kept and the rules for their access and use;
- all children know what they must not touch for reasons of safety and privacy;
- children are taught and then encouraged to act independently in choosing, collecting and returning resources as appropriate;
- children and teachers act together to establish an attractive, welcoming and well organised environment engendering respect, care and value for all resources.

Central resources are generally the responsibility of the subject coordinators, each of whom may have a small budget available (according to each subject's priority within the School

Development Plan). Stationery and consumables are stored centrally with free access to all staff.

Time is a resource that we value. To maximise its use:

- in the early years pupils' time is tightly organised by the teachers;
- as children progress throughout the school they are encouraged to take greater control of their own learning including the use of time;
- time wasting is reduced by ensuring that tasks are made specific and clearly defined;
- all children engage in useful activities immediately upon entering the classroom and know what to do between the end of an activity and the end of the session.

Information and communication technology is a major resource and tool, which is used across the whole curriculum.

The Class Library/Book Corners are a valued resource. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their organisation and maintenance.

10. REPORTING

Records of Progress (see Assessment and Record Keeping Policy) kept for each child are:

- updated termly by class teachers and contain samples of pupils' work;
- examined by class teachers at the start of each academic year as they prepare for a new class;
- retained throughout the child's time at the school and passed on to secondary school when pupils leave.

Reporting to parents is done through interviews in the autumn and spring, core subjects in a written report (February), yearly through a full written report (July), and through an interim report (April). Parents also receive results from the InCAS assessments in October. Parents are made aware that:

- parent interviews are held on two consecutive evenings in the autumn and spring term;
- they may meet their child's teacher by appointment at any other time to discuss particular concerns;

Formal summative assessment is carried out at the end of Key Stage 2 through SATs and other assessments take place during each school year (see Assessment and Record Keeping Policy).

On completion of this activity:

- results of the individual pupil assessments may be made available to the parents concerned in cases where appropriate and useful;
- the overall statistical profile (but not individual results) is made available to governors and will be reviewed at the termly meeting of the Education subcommittee of governors.
- End of year assessments are completed in Years 1 -5

Appendix i

Differentiation

Differentiating instruction is doing what's fair and developmentally appropriate for pupils. It is a collection of best practices strategically employed to maximize pupils' learning at every turn, including giving them the tools to handle anything that is undifferentiated. It requires us to do different things for different pupils some, or a lot, of the time. It's whatever works to advance the pupil. It is highly effective teaching and whatever conscientious teachers do to increase pupils' learning over that which otherwise could be achieved by a one-size-fits-all approach (Wormeli).

Differentiated instruction and partaking in standardized tests are not oxymoronic (Wormeli). Pupils will do well on standardized assessments if they know the material well, and differentiated instruction's fundamental objective is to teach in whatever way pupils best learn.

Elements of differentiated instruction include:

- Tiering for readiness;
- Pre-assessing;
- Flexible grouping;
- Scaffolding;
- Adjusting the pacing of delivery or support so content is more meaningful and easily retained in long-term memory;
- Adjusting the amount of practice for different pupils according to what is needed;
- Rephrasing an example so it makes better sense to a pupil;
- Using descriptive feedback to revise pupils' skills and knowledge;
- Compacting curriculum so advanced pupils don't stagnate;
- Building prior knowledge where this is none so information stays in the mind;
- Coming to know our pupils well so we know what buttons to push so they learn more effectively;
- Designing lessons to increase what pupils capture the first time the topic is taught rather than relying on hours of remediation to fix misconceptions and build missing foundations.

Differentiated instruction is far more demanding on pupils than undifferentiated approaches. It provides the proper challenge at the proper time in the learning and it always pushes pupils to transcend current status.

Tomlinson states, "There is obviously no research to support a frantically assembled collection of worksheets and colouring exercises. By contrast, abundant empirical research and research from neuroscience support the assertion that pupils learn when work is appropriately challenging for them, and conversely, do not learn when work is consistently too easy or too hard; in other words, pupil readiness matters. Research also shows that pupils learn better when they find work personally relevant and engaging; in other words, pupil interest matters. The third element of the model, learning profile, represents research evidence on how gender, culture, intelligence preference, and learning style may impact learning."

She also says, “The goal should not be to pigeonhole pupils, but rather to provide options for learning and to help pupils become increasingly aware of what supports their learning at a given time.”

Differentiated instruction is not individualised instruction, although sometimes teachers may individualise as warranted. No one expects educators to implement an individual education programme for each pupil. When a teacher answers a confused pupil's question, stands near to a pupil to quiet him or her down, suggests an alternative research resource, or suggests that a pupil turns lined paper sideways to create columns, the teacher is individualising and so differentiating instruction. The individualising is temporary, done as necessary.

Some pupils learn primarily in whole-class instruction, some in small groups, and some working individually. Successful teachers offer all three formats over the course of a week or unit of study.

Differentiation does not mean Unbalanced Workloads

A myth is that teachers differentiate instruction and assessments by changing the workload or difficulty of the task. Example: If a pupil is an unusually gifted reader, teachers don't give him longer or more books to read. Instead, teachers increase the challenge of the reading, pushing the pupil to use reading and the author's ideas in new ways.

If possible, teachers try to keep the task roughly the same for pupils because it was something the teachers deemed important to instruction. If we change that task, however, it's fine, but we have to make sure it's not an increase in the workload. We don't ask advanced pupils to complete something in two days that we allow the rest of the class an entire week to do.

Considering cognitive science, teachers don't want pupils to confabulate (Sousa, 2001). Confabulation is when pupils get a partial understanding of something but the brain requires the whole picture, so it makes up information or borrows from other memories and inserts information in the missing holes, convincing itself that this was the original learning all along. It takes more emotional and intellectual energy to go back and undo bad learning than it does to teach for mastery the first time around. For example, teachers who are differentiating instruction sometimes tell some pupils to not do homework others are doing. Homework is meant to reinforce, practise, extend, and prepare, not to learn new concepts from scratch. Teachers can re-teach partial understanding pupils tomorrow and give them an alternative assignment that combines practice from today and tomorrow's concepts.

Sousa also says, “What teachers teach is irrelevant. It doesn't matter what they teach. Really. What matters is what pupils take with them when they leave those teachers at the end of the year. This is the greatest testimony to teachers and to a school. If teachers are rallying their energy around what they're teaching, they've missed the boat. Ask them instead to spend their energy on what pupils are learning. Do teachers teach in a way that is likely to be retained beyond just parroting information back on a test, or do they teach to get through a section of the curriculum? If teachers are teaching for long-term retention, then they employ best practices (e.g., differentiated instruction) and do whatever it takes for pupils to learn.”

[drawn from articles and books by Rick Wormeli, David Sousa and Carol Ann Tomlinson]