

*ST JAMES THE GREAT RC (VA) PRIMARY AND  
NURSERY SCHOOL*

*THORNTON HEATH*

**PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING**

**A Teaching and Learning Policy**

September 2003

## **Governing Body's Curriculum Policy Statement**

The Mission Statement for St James the Great School states that the school belongs to the parish communities it serves and exists to educate the children of these communities with the Gospel values, traditions and beliefs of the Catholic faith at the centre of its ethos whilst recognising the individuality of the "faith journey".

We aim to foster a respect for self and others within a framework that enables all pupils to develop the highest possible standards of academic, moral, physical and spiritual potential whilst recognising and valuing the natural differing abilities among the children.

The school will deliver the National Curriculum in the context of its Catholic ethos with the specific aims of the school's curriculum being:-

- 1 To make prayer, worship and liturgy real educational experiences and to contribute successfully to the development of the faith of each individual in the school community by:-
  - Affirming the importance of Religious Education as a subject underpinning the National Curriculum through implementation of the school's RE policy;
  - Developing links with the parishes by initiation and implementation of a school/parish two year cycle;
  - Valuing our individual gifts from God.
  
- 2 To create a dynamic interaction between home, parish and school which provides preparation for the pupil's entry into the wider community by:-
  - Maintaining and further developing the provision of healthy competition, thereby providing additional incentives for our pupils to improve and celebrate their own and others skills as a preparation for likely future experiences taking account of the competitive nature of some aspects of society whilst providing care and support in the situations of winning and losing, success and failure;
  - Fostering links with the wider community to raise awareness of (inequalities within society) OR (needs in society);
  - Developing a common approach to the multicultural aspects of our school;
  - Building upon current cultural experiences as a preparation for leisure.
  
- 3 To ensure that the pupils' experience of relationships within the school have a formative and significant influence on their understanding of inter-personal skills by:-
  - The school sustaining the importance of human relationships by example;
  - Developing human relationships through the construction and implementation of a whole school discipline policy;
  - Reviewing the existing PSHCE policy.
  - Fostering in school attitudes of caring, sharing and being helpful throughout the whole curriculum.
  
- 4 To ensure that the curriculum provides a Catholic Christian setting in which children can grow in understanding and the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values by:-
  - The school demonstrating its valuing of God's creation by increasing environmental awareness through appropriate cross-curricular themes;

- Development of the values and attitudes outlined in the school's Teaching and Learning and programmes of study;
  - Formulation and development of an assessment policy that will ensure continuity and consistency in line with external requirements.
1. To provide support and development, in a school which looks to Christ for the basis of its existence, for all the teaching staff together with all non-teaching staff and parents, as well as pupils by:-
- Implementing professional development of staff through the processes of performance management;
  - To provide staff with opportunities for both school generated and personal in-service training;
  - Affirming children by providing pupils with realistic challenges and celebrations of individual successes;
  - Building upon existing pastoral care through the development of more formalised procedures;
  - Co-operation with parents through encouragement of them into school.

## **Religious Education**

The fact that we are a Catholic school means that we are essentially different from our County school colleagues.

*“The Catholic school finds its true justification in the mission of the Church: it is based on educational philosophy in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony.”*

The ethos of the Catholic school is inseparable from its curriculum. God is revealed to the children in the whole curriculum and in their everyday experiences in the school.

We see religious education as being more than a curriculum subject. It is something which affects every area of school life – the way we treat each other and the way we do our work.

We also recognise that parents are primarily and principally responsible for their children's faith which we support through our partnership role with the parents and parish through our part in the pupils' religious education. We assist parents in fulfilling the promises that they made when they brought their children to be baptised. We do this in a number of ways:-

1. By teaching the children about their religion. Every class has a religious education scheme of work planned for them each term. This is adjusted according to their age and understanding. This teaching uses the Here I Am scheme and follows the Church's year through the use of scripture, stories and everyday situations. The lessons teach the children about their religion but they cannot give the children faith or belief – that comes from their parents.
2. We use celebrations and prayer. Each class has a religious celebration at least once a term. This may be a class Mass, Prayer Service, Assembly or another form of celebration. These are prepared by the children. All parents are welcome to come and share in these celebrations. The school celebrates together at the end of each school year in addition to attending Mass together on Holy Days and special feast days or for special occasions in the life of the school. This may be through attendance at Mass in the parish Churches or at school. The infant children will also experience on some of these

occasions a non-Eucharistic service more appropriate to their understanding of the celebration.

We hold a daily assembly for all or part of the school where the children learn to share their faith and celebrate together. Every child begins and finishes each school day with their own class prayer.

3. We work closely with the parish and the parents. We recognise that the most successful way of developing a child's religious understanding and faith occurs when the home, school and parish work in close partnership.

The school supports the parents and parish in preparing the children for the Sacraments of First Holy Communion and Reconciliation (First Confession). Our parents and priests work closely together at this time and the school support this work. In addition our priests provide a much valued chaplaincy service for the school.

### **Monitoring**

Governors have a responsibility to ensure that the application of this policy is monitored. This will be done through information gathered from the annual Parent/Governor meeting, Headteacher's report to Governors, Governors' Curriculum Committee formal and informal visits to the school, SATs results, behaviour of pupils and demand for places at the school.

## **General Principles of Children's Learning**

Children need a balance of activities and experiences if they are to develop and become independent learners within the environment of St James the Great School. These include:

- First hand experience e.g. investigation and problem solving and observation.
- Exploring tasks in a practical manner.
- Activities that are planned to develop each child's potential and ability.
- Time to think and reflect on tasks for teacher and child.
- Being able to work together as well as on their own.
- Healthy competition.
- Taking control of their own learning.
- Having a progressive role in the evaluation and assessment process.
- Structured and planned role play.

The **Key Principles of Learning** at St James the Great School are outlined as:

That:

- Christian values and attitudes are fostered throughout the whole curriculum.
- There is a variety of teaching methods and approaches.
- A differentiated curriculum is offered to all pupils.
- A shared understanding of assessment, expectations and standards of work.
- A stimulating, happy and secure environment exists.
- Appropriate good quality teaching resources are easily accessible.
- Children develop well and make good progress when they know how they are doing.
- A common recognised code of discipline and good behaviour exists.
- Home, School and Parish work in partnership.

**Agreed Principle**

**Christian values and attitudes will be fostered throughout the curriculum**

**Practical Application**

There will be evidence in the learning environment of . . .	The staff will try to make sure that . . .	Implications for the whole school will be . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Activities chosen to foster specific attitudes.</li><li>• Published class prayer – setting tone.</li><li>• Published classroom rules as agreed by children.</li><li>• Children supporting each other including understanding of differing abilities.</li><li>• Equal opportunities, cultural differences and gender roles addressed in teaching and in choice of resources.</li><li>• Gospel values explicitly identified and known by children.</li><li>• All curriculum work valued for use in worship.</li><li>• Attitudes fostered in work in all subjects.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Match teaching methods to the attitudes being fostered.</li><li>• Children are aware of other faiths and respect other beliefs and customs.</li><li>• Children’s dignity and self esteem is promoted at all times.</li><li>• Children have opportunities to choose work for topic files.</li><li>• Good role models are encouraged.</li><li>• Issues of equal opportunities, cultural differences and gender roles are discussed and respected.</li><li>• External agencies are in support of principles.</li><li>• Opportunities are made to publish achievements.</li><li>• There is a time for reflection on work done.</li><li>• Values and attitudes considered when plans and scheme of work developed.</li><li>• Extra curricular links in plans.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regular inset on using cross-curricular links to foster attitudes.</li><li>• Links with other communities at local level e.g. faith, disadvantaged etc.</li><li>• A consistent approach and common understanding of Gospel values and attitudes identified.</li><li>• A consistent approach in fostering them.</li><li>• Resources for equal opportunities, cultural differences and gender roles consciously collected and easily available.</li><li>• Public recognition (certificates) for attitude and application.</li><li>• High expectations of whole class when out of school and public praise.</li><li>• Shared assemblies to celebrate children’s work and values.</li><li>• Relations and communications with parish, home and school.</li><li>• Visitors reflect ethos.</li></ul>

**Agreed Principle**

**There is a variety of teaching methods and approaches**

**Practical Application**

There will be evidence in the learning environment of . . .	The staff will try to make sure that . . .	Implications for the whole school will be . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group activities – mixed ability and other.</li><li>• Whole class approach.</li><li>• Individual teaching.</li><li>• Focus groups.</li><li>• Paired work.</li><li>• Missed year group work.</li><li>• Across year group work.</li><li>• Across Key Stage groups.</li><li>• Planned educational visits.</li><li>• Individual SEN programmes.</li><li>• Support groupings/pairings.</li><li>• Pyramid effect at work – where one passes information to others.</li><li>• Adult help.</li><li>• Specialist agency support teaching?</li><li>• Nursery Nurses and classroom assistants.</li><li>• EAL support services.</li><li>• ICT being used to support teaching and learning.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The curriculum is inclusive.</li><li>• All children are able to participate in the curriculum.</li><li>• They co-ordinate the various adults who work in the classroom.</li><li>• They have appropriate resources.</li><li>• There is differentiation of curriculum and resources.</li><li>• They promote a secure and positive learning environment.</li><li>• They work with and monitor colleagues as appropriate.</li><li>• They use appropriate teaching methods to meet the needs of the child.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agreed principles are implemented by all staff.</li><li>• Staff are aware of the resources needed.</li><li>• That co-ordinators are aware of the needs of the staff.</li><li>• Effective and consistent communications systems.</li><li>• Staff support to try different methods of teaching.</li><li>• Key Stage sharing of ideas e.g. what works well.</li><li>• Continual updating of resources.</li></ul>

**Agreed Principle**

**A differentiated curriculum is offered to all pupils**

**Practical Application**

There will be evidence in the learning environment of . . .	The staff will try to make sure that . . .	Implications for the whole school will be . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff recognition of the value of each pupil's achievement.</li><li>• Well planned group and individual learning outcomes.</li><li>• A variety of teaching strategies.</li><li>• A wide selection of appropriate resources.</li><li>• A variety of groupings.</li><li>• Different levels of work and achievement according to pupils' ability.</li><li>• A range of materials and support appropriate to tasks.</li><li>• Recognition of previous experiences and learning to inform planning.</li><li>• Inclusivity.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suitable praise and encouragement is given to each child.</li><li>• Work is suited to the ability of the pupil.</li><li>• That individual needs are met using a variety of approaches.</li><li>• An appropriate range of resources are available and accessible.</li><li>• Classroom organisation aids the learning process.</li><li>• A broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum offered to all pupils.</li><li>• Equal access to curriculum for all pupils irrespective of ability, race and gender.</li><li>• There are differing expectations.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promotion of a positive whole school ethos.</li><li>• Provision of resources and materials to enable appropriate learning.</li><li>• An awareness of cross-curricular skills and concepts.</li><li>• The need to provide specifically for those pupils with special needs.</li><li>• Development and implementation of an Assessment Policy.</li></ul>

**Agreed Principle**

**A stimulating, happy and secure environment exists**

**Practical Application**

There will be evidence in the learning environment of . . .	The staff will try to make sure that . . .	Implications for the whole school will be . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appropriate displays of children’s work that promote a response.</li><li>• Children who are settled, care for each other and their environment.</li><li>• Pupils who have an enthusiasm for school.</li><li>• Celebration of achievement.</li><li>• Progress being made.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They are supportive of each other and the children.</li><li>• Good relationships are fostered with all pupils.</li><li>• There is clear evidence of good organisation and sound planning.</li><li>• They are consistent in their approach.</li><li>• Children’s self esteem and independence is valued and fostered.</li><li>• Visitors are welcomed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognition of the tri-partite relationship between home, school and parish.</li><li>• Good relationships exist between staff.</li><li>• Every staff member and child is valued.</li><li>• Opportunities are provided for developing working and social relationships.</li><li>• Continuity of approach.</li><li>• Mutual support and recognition of each other’s abilities and needs.</li></ul>

**Agreed Principle**

**A shared understanding of assessment, expectations and standards of work**

**Practical Application**

There will be evidence in the learning environment of . . .	The staff will try to make sure that . . .	Implications for the whole school will be . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work of excellence (for the child) celebrated on display.</li><li>• Clearly identified and agreed approach to marking.</li><li>• Children’s understanding of expectations in presentation.</li><li>• Effectively organised classrooms.</li><li>• Continuing dialogue with children.</li><li>• Children acting on information gained from assessment.</li><li>• Whole school handwriting policy in use.</li><li>• Children’s involvement in self assessment.</li><li>• Children use and appreciate good quality equipment.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are consistently high expectations.</li><li>• Good role models are encouraged.</li><li>• Standards are agreed through regularly moderated work.</li><li>• A wide range of assessment methods are used.</li><li>• Their effort and good work will be recognised.</li><li>• They are encouraged to take pride in their own and other’s work.</li><li>• The appropriate levels of support are given to all children.</li><li>• Children are given opportunities to improve their work.</li><li>• Staff act upon information gained from assessment.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quality materials and resources.</li><li>• Work needs to be moderated on a regular cycle, within years, across Key Stages and across the school.</li><li>• Examples of good work (role models) in common areas of school e.g. books in library, display.</li><li>• Involvement of rest of school in celebration of good work e.g. sharing assembly, class assemblies.</li><li>• Inset on assessment practices.</li><li>• Parents need to be informed of school practice and support policies including homework.</li></ul>

**Agreed Principle**

**Appropriate good quality teaching resources are easily accessible**

**Practical Application**

There will be evidence in the learning environment of . . .	The staff will try to make sure that . . .	Implications for the whole school will be . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Range of good quality equipment appropriate to the child and teacher – appropriate size for the children to handle.</li><li>• Classrooms organised with easily accessible resources.</li><li>• Children can locate what they need.</li><li>• Children have the opportunity to select appropriate equipment for their work.</li><li>• Good supply of equipment.</li><li>• Storage space for pupil and teacher resources.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Items are labelled. Teachers and children use equipment with care and respect.</li><li>• Resources are returned after use.</li><li>• Economic use of resources.</li><li>• Children/staff understand the importance and cost of resources.</li><li>• Use of resources are regularly monitored and replaced.</li><li>• Resources are used and stored in a safe and appropriate way.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adequate, planned funding for resources – curriculum led.</li><li>• Everyone knows what is available and where it is.</li><li>• Co-ordinators have planned ahead to ensure resources are available to meet the curriculum.</li><li>• Teachers should share talents and ideas.</li><li>• Appropriate inset and feedback from courses.</li><li>• Timetable for some resources e.g. hall, library, ICT room, classroom assistants, parents.</li></ul>

**Agreed Principle**

**Children develop well and make progress when they know how they are doing**

**Practical Application**

There will be evidence in the learning environment of . . .	The staff will try to make sure that . . .	Implications for the whole school will be . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive comments in pupils' books.</li><li>• Value of children's work through display.</li><li>• Appropriate teacher guidance.</li><li>• A variety of work showing progression.</li><li>• Self assessment and personal target setting.</li><li>• Positive communication.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attainable targets are met.</li><li>• Marking is maintained.</li><li>• A portfolio of work exists for each child.</li><li>• The child feels valued.</li><li>• Consistent expectations for every child.</li><li>• Constructive feedback.</li><li>• Pupils are aware of the purpose for which the task has been set.</li><li>• Pupils are happy and well motivated.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communications with parents.</li><li>• Continuity and progression.</li><li>• The provision of a welcoming environment.</li><li>• Implementation of school policies.</li><li>• Assemblies that recognise achievement.</li><li>• Maintenance of pupil records that inform future planning.</li></ul>

**Agreed Principle**

**A common recognised code of discipline and good behaviour exists**

**Practical Application**

There will be evidence in the learning environment of . . .	The staff will try to make sure that . . .	Implications for the whole school will be . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Respect for everyone – courtesy and consideration.</li><li>• Children being well mannered.</li><li>• Respect for their environment.</li><li>• Children working effectively in a given situation.</li><li>• Respect for possessions and property.</li><li>• Pride in classroom and school appearance.</li><li>• Orderly conduct around school.</li><li>• Increasing awareness of self discipline by children.</li><li>• Children apply standards in any given situation.</li><li>• Learning taking place in well disciplined environment.</li><li>• Good behaviour being recognised.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Everyone is aware of the school policy on discipline and good behaviour and work to raise standards. We need to be fair.</li><li>• Children are aware of reasons and benefits of good behaviour.</li><li>• There is an awareness of rules and sanctions by children.</li><li>• They will ensure a consistent approach.</li><li>• They respect the environment.</li><li>• They provide good role models.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assemblies give opportunities to celebrate, recognise and acknowledge achievement.</li><li>• The wider community if aware of code of discipline and good behaviour.</li><li>• Consistent approach and procedures are followed.</li><li>• Support for all staff is given.</li><li>• Staff are aware and follow hierarchy structure.</li><li>• That all adults uphold the dignity of the child.</li></ul>

**Agreed Principle**

**Home, School and Parish work in Partnership**

**Practical Application**

There will be evidence in the learning environment of . . .	The staff will try to make sure that . . .	Implications for the whole school will be . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clergy being involved in the whole life of the school e.g. spending time and getting to know the children.</li><li>• Clergy being involved in school worship e.g. class masses, prayer services etc.</li><li>• Parental help in the school on outside trips.</li><li>• Parental support with homework.</li><li>• Visits to the Churches by children for guided tours, masses and concerts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents are used and valued.</li><li>• Clergy know what expectations are for them as regards their role i.e. regular visits.</li><li>• Parents are kept informed about their child's needs and progress.</li><li>• School/parish cycle is implemented.</li><li>• Home/school and parish jointly take part in Sacramental preparation.</li><li>• There is support for Friends Association activities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oratory is used for collective acts of worship.</li><li>• Agreed events – in school and parish.</li><li>• Home visits (particularly Nursery).</li><li>• Recognising families who need support from school and parish.</li><li>• Liaison of teachers and clergy re. services and activities.</li><li>• Liaison with external support agencies.</li><li>• Formal and informal meetings with parents.</li><li>• School/parish cycle is adhered to.</li><li>• Inviting parents to school events.</li><li>• Regular newsletters.</li><li>• Parents are kept informed of out of school activities.</li></ul>







## **CLASS MANAGEMENT FOR ACHIVEMENT**

### **Individual**

#### **What do we mean by the term?**

- A child working alone.
- A child working one to one with a teacher/adult.

#### **When is it most appropriate?**

- Individual assessment, reinforcing skills, reading, top copy work from draft.
- Conferencing, clarification, personal reflection, extension work.
- Promoting self discipline and self esteem, comfort, feedback etc.

#### **How is it organised?**

- Separate room, quiet room use, separate seating arrangements, creation of space near the teacher.

#### **What attitudes/values can be fostered?**

- Fostering teacher/pupil relationship, independence, self reliance, creativity, responsibility, self control, self esteem.

#### **Implications for the teacher**

- Class management.
- Arranging room to facilitate space.
- Less direct input from teacher for others in the class.

#### **For children and their learning**

- Quality time on one to one.
- Confidence building
- Trust placed in the child.

## **CLASS MANAGEMENT FOR ACHIEVEMENT**

### **Group**

#### **What do we mean by the term?**

- More than one child and less than a whole class.

#### **When is it most appropriate?**

- For differentiated tasks e.g. ability group.
- Collaborative work. For problem solving and investigative work.
- For consolidation and development of tasks. As a choice.
- For assessment purposes.

#### **How is it organised?**

- Friendship, ability, gender (mixed and single), mixed ability, interest, colour teams, personalities, peer group support.
- Groups may work with or away from the teacher.

#### **What attitudes/values can be fostered?**

- Teamwork, leadership, co-operation, self esteem, respect for others, tolerance, curiosity, reconciliation, enquiry, reflection, conflict resolution.

#### **Implications for the teacher**

- Classroom organisation.
- Keeping track.
- Forward planning.
- Balance of personalities and behavioural needs.

#### **For children and their learning**

- Independence.
- Responsibility.
- More direct support.
- Co-operation.
- Socialisation.

## **CLASS MANAGEMENT FOR ACHIEVEMENT**

### **Focus Group**

#### **What do we mean by the term?**

- Planned target group identified by teacher for specific purpose which could be taught by teacher or other adult.

#### **When is it most appropriate?**

- Skill development, specific teaching points, consolidation, assessment, observations, revision.

#### **How is it organised?**

- Dependent on need or activity.

#### **What attitudes/values can be fostered?**

- Listening skills, respect for others, patience, consideration, commitment and application to task.

#### **Implications for the teacher**

- Classroom organisation.
- Planning clear objectives and assessment opportunities.

#### **For children and their learning**

- Quality time.
- Leadership for children.
- Development of confidence.
- Developing strategies for group work.
- Chance to question and explain ideas in a secure environment.

# **CLASS MANAGEMENT FOR ACHIEVEMENT**

## **Whole Class**

### **What do we mean by the term?**

- Whole class gathering together for one purpose or activity.

### **When is it most appropriate?**

- At the beginning or end of activity.
- When introducing, briefing, brainstorming, collecting evidence, planning or evaluating an activity e.g. storytelling, tv, music, P.E. etc.

### **How is it organised?**

- Carpet area, P.E. – Hall/playground.
- At tables – as long as teachers/children have eye contact.

### **What attitudes/values can be fostered?**

- Community, sharing, belonging, turn-taking, respect.

### **Implications for the teacher**

- Differentiation by task or outcome.
- Higher order questioning.
- Discipline.
- Equal opportunities.
- Space, organisation, furniture, focus point.

### **For children and their learning**

- Behaviour.
- Peer pressure.