

St. Saviour's Church of England Junior School Teaching and Learning Policy

January 2024

St Saviour's Church of England Junior School

Policy: Teaching and Learning Policy

Review Period: Annual

Ratified by Governing Body: January 2025

Body:

Date of next review: January 2026

Our Christian Values: Courage, Consideration, Community

We believe all children are unique in the eyes of God and all deserve an equal chance to learn and enjoy across the curriculum. We aim to create a caring, Christian environment in which children can learn and thrive.

Aims

- Children to experience an engaging, broad curriculum which challenges them
- Progressively build pupils' vocabulary
- Deliver a well-sequenced curriculum which gives children the knowledge, skills and cultural capital they will need for the next stage of their school career and as adults
- Teach pupils within a Christian ethos
- To develop curiosity, resilience and independence in our pupils
- Use our learning environment, visits, visitors and themed days to enrich the learning experience for children

At St. Saviour's, we believe children learn best when:

- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are positive
- Lessons are planned carefully, taking account of children's prior learning and any additional needs
- Expectations are high
- Behaviour (learning behaviour / focus) and ethos (social behaviours) are excellent
- Teachers have secure subject and pedagogical knowledge
- Teachers consistently use a range of teaching styles to engage and challenge pupils
- Pupils have their basic needs met, prior to learning (they are safe and well cared for)
- Children are clear about what they are learning and what end point they should reach
- Teachers effectively organise and manage resources
- Classroom routines minimise wasted time
- Teachers are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of their pupils; assessment informs teaching
- Key vocabulary is taught, revised and assessed
- Teachers give clear, concise feedback to children about their learning
- Learning groups, where used, are fluid to prevent learning being capped
- Children are active in the lesson and not passively listening to extended teacher talk
- Plenaries and mini-plenaries are used to re-cap key knowledge, assess learning and secure key vocabulary

Organisation

St. Saviour's curriculum uses the National Curriculum as its starting point. In English and maths, learning groups or ability sets are often used, these vary according to the attainment of each cohort. We analyse data when considering whether or not to set by attainment. Across the wider curriculum, children generally learn in their classes, though may work in smaller groups with other adults. Learning is based around topics which are generally organised over a new term. Most subjects are taught discretely, there are links between English planning and foundation subjects when it is appropriate to do so. Art, Science, History, Geography and Design Technology lessons are based on CUSP.

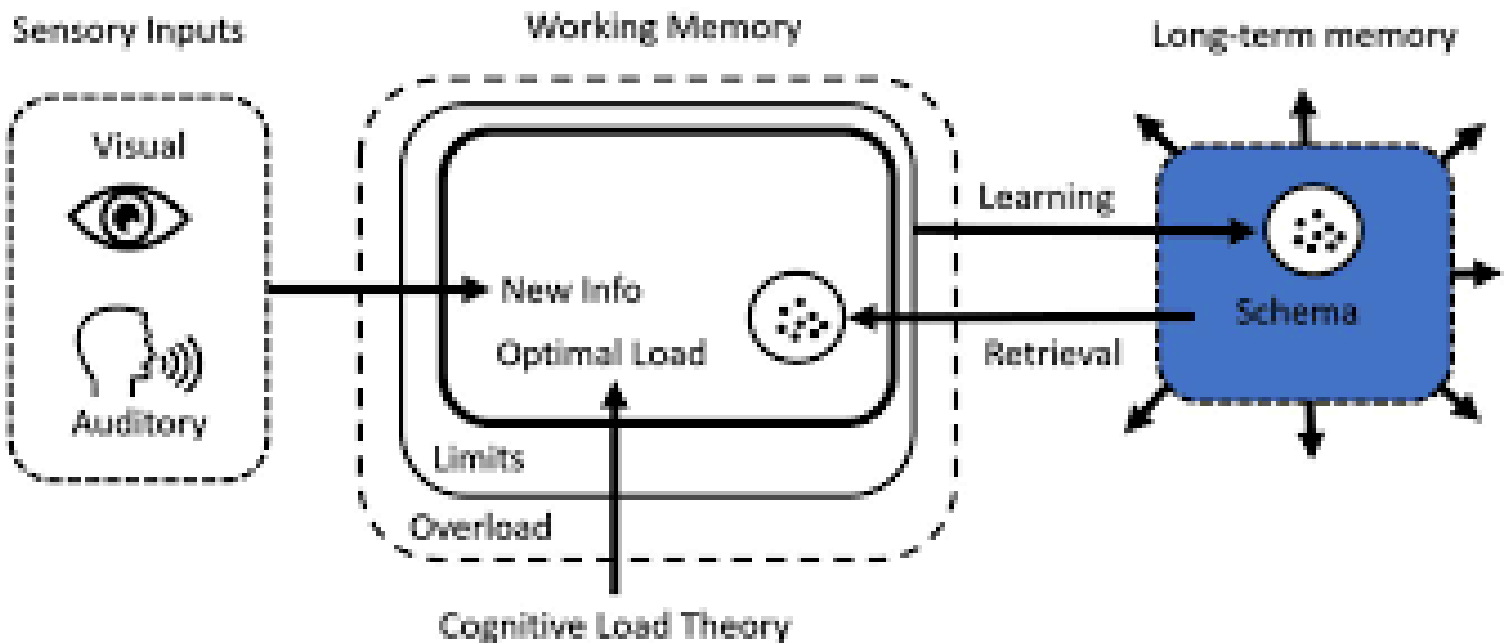
Effective Teaching and Learning

The delivery of the curriculum at St Saviours is based upon a range of theoretical perspectives: Sweller's Cognitive load theory, Piaget's Schema theory and Rosenshine's Principles of instruction. We use these three perspectives to inform classroom practice and staff training which allows for evaluation and improvement of the curriculum.

Sweller's Cognitive load theory

Sweller says we take in information through our visual and auditory 'channels' which transfers to the working memory or short-term memory. The working memory acts like a filter for all the information and knowledge we receive every day. It prioritises the information that gets transferred into the long-term memory and that which remains in the short-term memory gets forgotten. The short-term memory can only hold a limited amount of information before it is 'overloaded'. If a child is holding too much in their short-term memory, it is unlikely new knowledge will be stored for the future. When we want pupils to use knowledge they have learned previously, it can be transferred from the long-term memory back into the short-term memory again for it to be used.

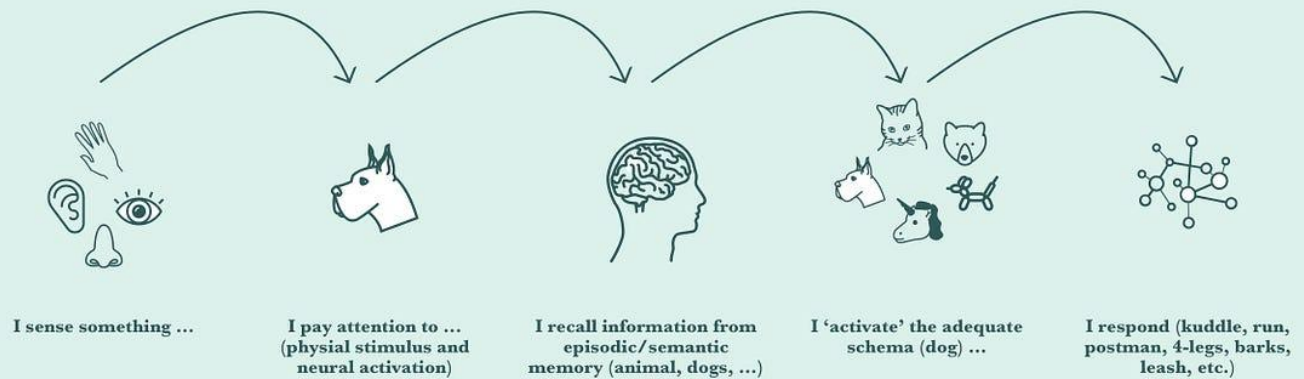
Using Sweller's cognitive load theory, we aim to help our pupils remember more by minimising the cognitive load and giving regular opportunities to recall knowledge through revisiting (retrieval practice). We use **Knowledge Organisers** for each topic and Knowledge Notes accompany every lesson. These identify the core knowledge we want our pupils to learn, revisit and remember. They also identify the core concepts and vocabulary. Regular quizzing allows teachers to use low-stake testing to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and prior knowledge and address these quickly.



Piaget's Schema theory

Schemas or schemata are 'cognitive structures' or webs of knowledge that are building blocks of cognitive development and learning. Our long-term memories are lots of schemata that have been built up over time which link knowledge and create meaning. When our pupils learn something new, we want the new knowledge to make connections with the existing schema. Our well-planned and carefully sequenced curriculum ensures that we build upon pupils' prior knowledge to encourage new knowledge, ideas and concepts to become 'sticky' by relating it to ones they already know.

Fig. 1: Schema Theory



Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction

Rosenshine's research links together the other two theories and these ten key principles apply to teaching all subjects:

1. Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning
2. Present new material in new steps
3. Ask a large number of questions
4. Provide models
5. Guide pupil practice
6. Check pupils' understanding
7. Obtain a high success rate
8. Provide scaffolds for difficult tasks
9. Require and check pupils' independent practice
10. Engage pupils in weekly and monthly reviews

THE PRINCIPLES OF INSTRUCTION

TAKEN FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF EDUCATION

This poster is from the work of Barak Rosenshine who based these ten principles of instruction and suggested classroom practices on:

- research on how the brain acquires and uses new information
- research on the classroom practices of those teachers whose students show the highest gains
- findings from studies that taught learning strategies to students.



01 DAILY REVIEW

Daily review is an important component of instruction. It helps strengthen the connections of the material learned. Automatic recall frees working memory for problem solving and creativity.

02 NEW MATERIAL IN SMALL STEPS

Our working memory is small, only handling a few bits of information at once. Avoid its overload — present new material in small steps and proceed only when first steps are mastered.

03 ASK QUESTIONS

The most successful teachers spend more than half the class time lecturing, demonstrating and asking questions. Questions allow the teacher to determine how well the material is learned.

04 PROVIDE MODELS

Students need cognitive support to help them learn how to solve problems. Modelling, worked examples and teacher thinking out loud help clarify the specific steps involved.

05 GUIDE STUDENT PRACTICE

Students need additional time to rephrase, elaborate and summarise new material in order to store it in their long-term memory. More successful teachers built in more time for this.

06 CHECK STUDENT UNDERSTANDING

Less successful teachers merely ask "Are there any questions?" No questions are taken to mean no problems. False. By contrast, more successful teachers check on all students.

07 OBTAIN HIGH SUCCESS RATE

A success rate of around 80% has been found to be optimal, showing students are learning and also being challenged. Better teachers taught in small steps followed by practice.

08 SCAFFOLDS FOR DIFFICULT TASKS

Scaffolds are temporary supports to assist learning. They can include modelling, teacher thinking aloud, cue cards and checklists. Scaffolds are part of cognitive apprenticeship.

09 INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Independent practice produces 'overlearning' — a necessary process for new material to be recalled automatically. This ensures no overloading of students' working memory.

10 WEEKLY & MONTHLY REVIEW

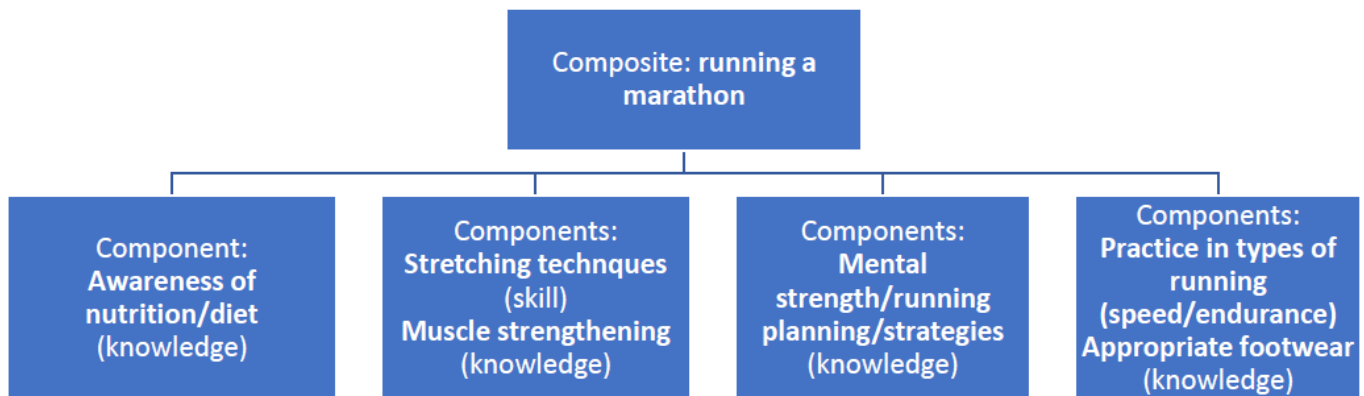
The effort involved in recalling recently-learned material embeds it in long-term memory. And the more this happens, the easier it is to connect new material to such prior knowledge.

Teachers use these ten principles when planning and resourcing the curriculum.

Curriculum Planning: a knowledge-rich curriculum

Pupils need to gain rich knowledge in a broad range of subjects so that they are equipped for each stage of their education and for their future lives. Knowledge is prioritised as pupils will require this in order to go on to use higher level skills. By following CUSP for Science, History, Geography, Art and DT, subject leaders can ensure that pupils are exposed to a well-sequenced curriculum (where new knowledge builds upon pupil's prior learning in a logical way) which identifies the core knowledge and concepts that are revisited time and time again so that pupils remember what they have learned in their long-term memories.

To understand these complex concepts (substantive concepts) or perform complex tasks or skills (disciplinary knowledge), the pupils require a secure foundation of knowledge (substantive knowledge). Each composite task which is strategically placed at the end of each module, has its own set of 'components' that we need to remember and be fluent with. For example, to be able to be successful in the composite task of running a marathon, we require knowledge and expertise in a range of components which are learned and practised regularly.



Components: the building blocks that fit together which when known, allow successful performance of a composite task.

Composite: a task that requires several building blocks or components.

We plan carefully what pupils need to know, building on past learning. We plan the order in which they will learn these things. We plan and check that pupils have the necessary and most important 'components' embedded in their long-term memory that they need to be successful in the composite tasks through regular retrieval tasks such as quizzes and we use these to inform us as to whether pupils have gained fluency in their memory of prior components so that their working memory is less likely to be overloaded when faced with a new task.

Having clear end points for each subject within our curriculum determines what we want pupils to know and be able to do by the end of each module, year and key stage. Teachers make further detailed content and sequencing choices as they implement the schemes within the classroom. They choose the most important content they want pupils to remember, sequence learning carefully to build more complex schema and constantly review and revisit knowledge so that knowledge 'sticks' in pupils' long-term memories.

Reading and Vocabulary

Promoting reading, communication skills and understanding of vocabulary are at the heart of our curriculum at St. Saviour's. Being able to read is key to accessing the entire curriculum. We work hard to ensure that every child will leave Key Stage 2 being able to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities. The curriculum is planned so that any pupils who fall behind are supported to learn to read quickly. It is an expectation that reading and vocabulary are taught in all subjects.

High-quality phonics teaching early in the key stage secures the crucial skills of word recognition that, once mastered, enable pupils to decode fluently and automatically, freeing them to concentrate on the meaning of the text. Where individuals require further support, we use the Toe by Toe programme as a targeted intervention. As children become more secure and fluent with the use of decoding skills, they can progress to developing their comprehension of texts. Reading to learn and reading for pleasure are both encouraged and have a high profile within the school environment.

Learning Environment

Teachers have a responsibility to create an engaging learning environment for pupils. Resources and displays should support learning and be accessible for all children. Teachers should know which children in their care have additional needs (such as sensory impairment) which may affect their access to the learning environment and should adapt their resources or environment accordingly. Classrooms should be clean, tidy and welcoming.

The following should be seen in each teaching area:

- Prayer area with bible, crucifix and battery-powered candles
- Book corner
- Maths prompts: number line, hundred square, 4 operations posters, problem solving sentence stems
- English prompts: spelling strategies, statutory words being learned, homophones poster, language through colour, reading strategies
- Core vocabulary
- CUSP module Big Ideas poster, Enlarged Knowledge Organiser
- Spanish dual coded vocabulary prompts
- Feelings board

SEND

Our aim is that our ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum is accessed by all of our pupils including those who are disadvantaged, pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language. We provide all children with support and provision appropriate to their individual needs. Whether tasks are scaffolded or additional support is provided, all children should be able to access as much of the curriculum as possible.

Teaching Assistants

The role of teaching assistants is to:

- Support teaching and learning, this might be done through ad hoc support in class or teaching children individually or in small groups – under the direction of a teacher
- Following a planned intervention such as Toe by Toe to address a specific need
- Pre-teaching or revising key learning for specific pupils
- Providing regular 1:1 or 1:2 support for children with SEND
- Preparing resources and helping maintain a high-quality learning environment

Homework

Our school does not set extensive written homework. Our principal expectation is that families will support their children with reading. We encourage parents to listen to their child read at least three times per week for fifteen to twenty minutes each time. We also encourage parents to read with or to their child and discuss the events and words within the text. We provide regular guidance for parents on how best to do this including through termly reading newsletters.

We set weekly, online maths homework using Times Tables Rockstars. It is set on a Tuesday and lasts for the week.

In addition, each year group provides a newsletter to parents, detailing the topics to be studied that term and also setting a choice of home learning projects. Home learning projects are intended to encourage interaction and talk between children and their parents / carers. The home learning tasks tend to be fun, open-ended and creative. Children present their home learning tasks to their class at the end of each term.

Assessment (please refer to the Assessment Policy)

Children's learning is assessed through ongoing teacher assessment, observation, discussion and marking on a day to day basis. This regular formative assessment checks what important prior knowledge and vocabulary they have remembered. Within foundation subjects, recording teacher assessments on whole class assessment grids, allows the teachers to adapt future lessons to address specific gaps and target support or extension where necessary. Additionally, teachers use Independent Writes at regular intervals to assess the progress of writing and to plan future lessons accordingly.

Summative assessments are used across the curriculum to check what pupils remember about what they have been taught – these may include at the end of a module, term, year or key stage. We use these to help us to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupil progress as well as helping teachers plan for future teaching and learning. Through the use of summative assessments, school leaders monitor the performance of pupil cohorts whilst year group leaders identify interventions that may be required. Summative assessment data is shared with school governors also.

Quality assuring the curriculum

We expect that all teaching would be judged as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. Pupils make good progress if they know and remember more of the curriculum for all subjects and the teachers apply the theoretical perspectives that underpin effective teaching and learning. If pupils remember the curriculum, they are making progress. The intention of quality assurance is to ensure that pupils are making good progress and achieve well in all subjects. Leaders at all levels (SLT, Year Group and Subject Leaders) carry out monitoring of teaching and learning. We check the quality of provision via learning walks, informal drop-ins, work scrutiny, data (including pupil progress meetings) and talking to children. We provide a range of professional development opportunities for teachers: training during staff meetings, coaching by subject leads, visits to other schools, support from external advisors, bought-in courses and peer coaching / observation. Where teaching or learning repeatedly fall below the expected standard and informal coaching has not improved outcomes, teachers will be placed in a formal Six Weeks of Support programme. This process has specified, timed outcomes – if, after support, goals are not achieved, the formal capability process would then begin.