

Teachers As Learners

At St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School we strive to create a stimulating environment so that by learning, playing and working together, we openly follow Christ's teachings. We seek to offer every person the opportunity to be a unique and valued individual.

We recognise that our teachers are also learners, so with that in mind, the school leadership fosters an environment to encourage teachers to continuously enhance their skills and knowledge to prepare their pupils for the next stage in their learning journey.

Areas we are developing	<p>Personal Learning and Thinking Skills These skills are already embedded in our curriculum and our extra-curricular activities but we want to make them more explicit to pupils and their parents.</p> <p>Challenge For The More Able Children We want to develop further the learning opportunities for the children who excel in a particular skill or exceed age-related expectations.</p>	
Starting point	<p>We want to make St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School an exciting place in which to learn for our pupils and our staff. To achieve this, we are committed to seeking out the best ideas from around the world to help us to improve and refine our practice and create an effective learning culture. Our aim is realise a sense of self-worth and personal growth in every member of the learning community which underpins our values of Trust, Respect, Optimism, Service and Creativity.</p> <p>The school has a very strong commitment to engaging in action research.</p> <p>Professor David Hargreaves describes how we should be aspiring to creating the conditions for deep learning which has three components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to Learn (for us this is Cooperative Learning) • Assessment for Learning • Student Voice <p>He lists the following as the characteristics of the deep learner and our work has focused on developing these skills in our pupils and our staff.</p>	
The Deep Learner		
Critically reflective	Independent	Self-directed
Self-motivated	Characteristics of the Deep Learner	Highly developed decision-making skills
Collaborative	Self-aware	

Things That Have Inspired Us!

Cooperative Learning	Cooperative Learning is an approach which has a proven track record of improving the attainment and engagement of all students and narrowing the attainment gap between the most and least able. It is based on the use of a number of structures suitable for any content which incorporates cooperative student to student interaction as an integral part of the learning process. It supports much of our other work in Assessment for Learning and Behaviour for Learning.
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Assessment for Learning	Our approach to Assessment is summarised below: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback whenever possible.• Feedback must give clear guidance as to where improvement is needed. Opportunity must also be given to make these improvements.• Pupils need to know the assessment criteria and be given the opportunity to work with them.• Praise the effort or process, not the innate ability or talent. To download a pdf of <i>Inside the Black Box</i> , click here
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Professor Charles Desforges	In his NCSL paper, <i>On Learning and Teaching</i> , Desforges discusses the major drivers of attainment, the characteristics of successful learning settings and lost learning opportunities. He poses the questions below: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can we promote maximum learning progression at points of transitions in schooling?• How can we fashion teachers' assessments of pupils' work so that it makes maximum impact on their progress?• How can we better teach pupils to use and apply the knowledge and skills we inculcate in them?• How can we avoid the metaphor of 'work' for classroom activity and ensure that more engagement with the curriculum is about learning and demands cognitive and metacognitive activity?' To download a copy of Desforges' paper, click here
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Behaviour for Learning	The National Archives website has some excellent information on behaviour for learning. It is designed to equip staff with the framework for maximising teaching and learning and minimising disruptive and unacceptable behaviour. For more on Behaviour for Learning, click here
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Professor Carol Dweck	<p>Carol Dweck has carried out a lot of very influential research about student motivation focusing particularly on the idea of belief in a fixed or growth mind set and the implications this has for encouraging or hindering learning. She also investigates how to give effective praise to promote the growth mind set.</p> <p>For an article about her work, click here</p>
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www.ted.com	<p>TED stands for Technology, Entertainment, Design. It started out (in 1984) as a conference bringing together people from those three fields. Since then its scope has become even broader. The annual conference now brings together the world's most fascinating thinkers and doers, who are challenged to give the talk of their lives (in 18 minutes). Their website makes the best talks and performances from TED available to the public, for free and its mission is spreading ideas. We especially like the Sir Ken Robinson clip on creativity (click here) and the Benjamin Zander, Shining Eyes clip (click here) but there are so many to see.</p> <p>For more information, click here</p>
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Dr Jonathan Sharples	<p>Dr Sharples gave a really interesting presentation about how we continue to learn throughout life because of brain plasticity and also discussed the role of executive function and neuroscience discoveries in learning.</p> <p>To download an article about executive function, click here. This clip from teachers.tv is a useful source of ideas on how the science of the brain can influence learning. To view <i>School Matters - Neuroscience, Schools and the Future</i>, click here</p>
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