



St. Catherine's CE Primary School

Basic Skills Policy

Policy Date: January 2012

Reviewed: January 2013, Jan 2014, May 2016, June 2018
Next review: Summer 2020

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BASIC SKILLS POLICY

What are basic skills?

Basic skills are defined as:

'The ability to read, write and speak in English and use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general.'

Quality Mark – Alliance for Lifelong Learning

Without good communication, literacy and mathematical skills, individuals are severely disadvantaged throughout their lives – as learners, in the workplace and as parents, consumers and citizens.

Rationale

At St Catherine's C of E Primary School, we recognise every child's right to be taught the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. These skills are essential for a child to flourish in our modern world. We endeavour to give all children every opportunity to gain in knowledge and make progress in the areas of attainment and achievement.

By under-attainment we mean a pupil who performs in English and/or maths below the expected standard for a pupil of his/her age.

By underachievement we mean a pupil who performs at a lower standard than their potential.

Aims

We aim to:

- Make sure that the initial teaching of basic skills in our school is effective;
- Identify pupils who under attain and implement programmes to try to prevent early failure;
- Motivate all pupils, particularly those who underachieve, to improve their basic skills and provide effective opportunities for them to do so.
- Equip parents and carers with skills to help their children to develop basic skills.

Strategy

A whole school audit has been carried out in order to devise a strategy for improving basic skills- this strategy has taken the form of The Curriculum @ St. Catherine's.

Every child in our school, through The Curriculum @ St. Catherine's will be able to develop the necessary skills needed to progress to Secondary School and the skills they need to succeed as learners in life.

Our Curriculum rests on a firm foundation of basic skills which will enable our children to ultimately explore and pursue their own interests. Although content is important and is taught according to National Curriculum requirements, skills and attitudes will be developed throughout. Children will discover that learning is not passive, but an active process that leads somewhere and in turn allows the child to see physical, tangible evidence of the skills they have learnt. This also helps children develop an evaluative attitude towards their work and a sense of not only pride in their work but a focus for areas to improve.

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Guidelines

- Basic skills will be taught to all children at St. Catherine's on a daily basis. We teach key skills through all curriculum subjects, e.g. use of number in Geography or working with others in PE and PSHCE.
- The EYFS Guidance, Letters and Sounds programme of teaching phonics, The Curriculum @ St Catherine's, Maths No Problem and the National Curriculum will be followed to develop basic skills.
- Individual, group class or whole school targets will be set in basic skills. This information will be in consultation with pupils and shared with parents.
- Pupils' attainment in basic skills will be tracked and updated termly.
- We will identify those pupils who are at risk of underachieving, using standardised information and teacher assessment.
- Improving basic skills in English and maths is the responsibility of all staff in the school. Staff work together to assess pupil progress, set targets and monitor teaching.

Assessment

Assessment of pupil progress is a regular part of teaching:

- Pupils are assessed in EYFS by completion of a Pupil Profile monitoring progress from the date of entry;
- Baseline assessment is carried out in the first term in Reception class;
- End of Key Stage SATs for pupils in Year 2 and 6;
- Half termly assessment tasks take place for reading, writing and maths
- Class-based English and Maths tests are set for pupils in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5. Data from these assessments is recorded on the school tracking system.

Assessment for Learning

Teachers talk to children about their work and our marking and feedback practice regularly gives children information and makes them aware of their strengths and areas to develop. This is demonstrated through our marking policy.

Children are given differentiated tasks, support and additional resources were appropriate to try and develop key skills.

Target setting

Each pupil in KS2 has an individual target for Reading, Maths and Writing. Pupil progress is shared with parents in the form of a short report in December and March and a longer report in the summer alongside 2 Parents' Evenings.

Strategies for achieving targets

1. Training

This school is committed to improving the skills of all staff to teach and extend basic skills. Training needs for teaching and support staff are identified through analysis of SATs results, audits of pupils' work by English and maths Subject Leaders, and by individual members of staff through the performance management process. The School Improvement Plan links to CPD. Training is delivered through Professional Development Days, INSET courses for teachers and Teaching Assistants and through courses undertaken by staff members independently.

2. Involving parents

We recognise that parents make a crucial contribution to developing their children's basic skills. Parents are invited to introductory talks before pupils enter school and given information and advice about ways to help their children. Parents are welcomed in to school to help in classrooms. Reading books, spelling lists and words to be learned are sent home. Pupils take homework in English and Maths home as outlined in the child's planner. Parent Evenings are held twice a year. Workshops are held to inform parents of teaching and learning of basic skills e.g. reading meetings and calculation workshops.

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3. Intervention

In each cohort, pupils are identified for appropriate additional support, e.g. Wave 2 and Wave 3 interventions. Pupils whose under attainment is significant are identified by the class teacher who, in consultation with the SENCo are placed on the Provision Map.

These pupils are placed on the SEN Register. A small number of pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan and receive individual support. Their progress is monitored at the Annual Review.

Monitoring our Basic Skills Policy

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Local Governing Body. Our Action plan will be discussed and reviewed by staff in staff meetings every term. The Headteacher monitors the overall strategy, in the light of feedback from test results. The SLT monitors progress towards completing the Action plan and towards new targets set.

Key skills and inclusion

This is achieved through a mix of order to provide a broad and balanced curriculum; we teach key skills to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. We deploy a range of different teaching styles and use differentiation appropriately. We strive hard to meet the needs of these with special educational needs, and those with special gifts and talents. For further details please refer to separate policies: Special Educational Needs, Gifted and Talented, Inclusion and Equal Opportunities.

Equal Opportunities

We believe that all pupils have the right to gain the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and we take positive action to ensure that pupils achieve the best possible progress.

Conclusion

At St Catherine's we will strive to promote the teaching of basic skills throughout all areas of school life and in doing so will equip our pupils with a firm foundation from which to enter society, confident in both English and maths.

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