

Teaching and Learning Policy

St Columba C of E Primary School



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Our Vision for Teaching and Learning

At St Columba C of E Primary School, teaching is inclusive, ambitious and relational. Rooted in our Christian vision of Love, Hope and Respect, our approach ensures that all pupils, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, build strong foundations so they can know more, remember more and do more.

Our teaching and learning policy is grounded in the research of Barak Rosenshine and structured through the four strands articulated by Tom Sherrington. These principles shape what teaching looks like in every classroom, every day. We take the approach of the 'give, give, give', where children are provided with support until taught the skills to be independent in their practice.

This policy defines what strong teaching looks like at St Columba.

1. Sequencing Concepts and Modelling

Strong foundations come first.

Teaching at St Columba is carefully sequenced so that knowledge and skills are introduced incrementally and coherently. Planning ensures that pupils are only asked to work independently after they have experienced seeing, hearing and understanding what success looks like.

Teachers

- Break learning into small, logical steps
- Explicitly teach new knowledge and vocabulary
- Reduce cognitive load through clear explanations and worked examples
- Revisit prior learning from earlier lessons, units and year groups
- Are confident to return to KS1 content in KS2 where gaps are identified

Modelling is non-negotiable in every lesson. Teachers provide clear models and narrate their thinking, so learning is made visible. This includes

- Live modelling of thinking, processes and outcomes
- Narrating choices and strategies to model metacognitive skills
- Modelling high quality oral responses, and insisting on oral responses to be in full correct sentences
- Modelling handwriting and presentation, with models remaining visible and referred to throughout the lesson

Providing multiple worked examples is expected, particularly when pupils are stuck or insecure; this is used as a pullback group as and when needed.

2. Questioning and Assessment for Learning

Teaching is responsive and highly interactive.

Learning is hidden and cannot be assumed. Teachers therefore use questioning and assessment for learning (AFL) to check understanding continually and adapt teaching in the moment, this could be through cut away or pull back groups. This should be throughout the lesson, not just in inputs, teachers will create opportunities for 'pit stops' during lessons where teaching in further supports learning. Adults should always ask themselves 'How is this going? How well have I explained this? Are they all making sense of this?' More effective teachers ask more questions.

Questioning:

- Involves all pupils, not just volunteers, teachers make 'cold calling' part of their usual routine. 'No opt out' is used – if children don't know an answer – come back to them to respond when they do.
- Whole class responses; children use whiteboards etc to respond to questioning which supports teachers' assessment
- Probes thinking, not just answers. Adults should ask follow on questions to ascertain clarity; can children add more detail to their responses?
- Requires pupils to narrate their reasoning in full sentences
- Uses sentence stems and structured talk to support high quality responses (Think, pair, share)

Teachers avoid ineffective habits such as relying on a few confident pupils or asking generic questions about understanding (Have you understood? vs What have you understood?).

Misconceptions are identified early and addressed immediately through re modelling, clarification or adjusted practice.

Staff know their pupils well, including their starting points, gaps and barriers to learning, and use this knowledge to shape teaching decisions.

3. Reviewing and Retrieving Material

Retrieval is frequent, low stakes and purposeful, not a bolt on.

Teaching at St Columba deliberately revisits learning so that knowledge moves into long term memory and can be used fluently. **Every lesson begins with a short review of previous learning. Registration times are seen as a key opportunity and used to revisit learning.**

Retrieval practice is:

- **Planned** daily, weekly and termly
- Low stakes and purposeful so children feel successful
- Drawn from current learning and prior terms/ year
- Used at the start and end of lessons
- ‘Pit stops’ during lessons

Teachers explicitly connect new learning to what pupils already know and create regular opportunities for pupils to recall, explain and apply previous learning orally and in writing. Teachers deliberately revisit key knowledge before building on it
“Last term we learned about fractions, today we will use that knowledge to...”

This approach supports confidence, fluency and deeper understanding across all subjects, including RE and foundation subjects.

Retrieval is used again in the plenary to strengthen memory. Teachers use quick checks: mini whiteboards, partner recall, exit questions, Friday quizzes etc.

4. Stages of Practice

Practice is deliberate, guided and inclusive.

All pupils need time to practise, but practice must be carefully structured to minimise misconceptions and maximise success.

At St Columba:

- Practice begins guided and moves gradually towards independence
- All adults circulate and intervene immediately when errors appear, including with foundational knowledge.
- There will be no waiting for the teacher (e.g. queuing for marking), children to have challenges and strategies/ routines built in to extend or support learning during these times.
- Choral repetition is used deliberately to support accuracy and confidence
- All pupils access the learning objective, with adaptations where needed
- SEND pupils receive adjusted scaffolds and resources to promote high expectations

- Challenge comes through application, problem solving and reasoning.

Teachers ensure pupils have sufficient time to practise before moving on, recognising that secure understanding is prioritised over coverage

Inclusive Practice and High Expectations

Inclusive practice reflects high aspirations for all. There is no ceiling placed on learning. Barriers are overcome.

Teachers remove barriers to learning through thoughtful adaptation, additional resources and responsive teaching. High expectations apply to:

- Oral responses using accurate vocabulary
- Presentation and handwriting
- Effort, focus and resilience

Adults consistently model correct letter formation, language structures and learning behaviours, supporting pupils when needed while encouraging independence.

Professional Practice and Consistency

This policy is a live document.

- It is referenced explicitly in staff meetings, subject development and professional dialogue
- Leaders use it as the lens for coaching, monitoring and learning walks
- Teachers and teaching assistants understand their shared responsibility for pupil progress
- Teaching assistants are deployed strategically to support access, practice and challenge, not task completion
- Every five minutes counts. Time in lessons is protected and used purposefully.

Achieving and Thriving for Every Child

At St Columba, our approach to teaching and learning ensures that every pupil achieves and thrives. Curriculum, teaching, assessment and wider provision work together to secure strong foundations, remove barriers and prepare pupils well for their next stage.

Securing Strong Foundations

Leaders prioritise secure foundations in communication and language, reading, writing and mathematics. Gaps are identified early and addressed through timely, targeted teaching so pupils keep up with their peers. Strong vocabulary and oracy development are embedded across the curriculum.

Inclusion and Equity

Inclusion begins with high-quality classroom teaching. Leaders ensure needs are identified early and supported through a graduated approach of assess, plan, do, review. Adaptations are purposeful, reduce barriers and maintain high expectations. Support for disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND and those facing additional barriers is strategically planned and regularly reviewed for impact.

Curriculum Access

The curriculum is ambitious and sequenced, so all pupils build knowledge cumulatively. Adaptations enable access without lowering expectations. Language development and retrieval support long-term memory and fluency.

Monitoring Impact

Leaders maintain an accurate understanding of teaching quality and pupil progress. Assessment informs teaching, identifies gaps quickly and ensures that adaptations and interventions improve outcomes. Professional development strengthens subject expertise and inclusive practice.

Attendance, Behaviour and Learning Culture

High expectations for attendance, behaviour and attitudes underpin effective learning. Leaders address barriers early and ensure a calm, relational environment where time is protected and pupils are ready to learn.