



**Shenfield St Mary's Church of England Primary School**

**Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy**

**Ratified: September 2025**

**Review date: October 2026**

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do.

Vision Statement: ***Unlock every child's potential as a unique child of God***

*Our aim is to ensure that every child's unique strengths are celebrated and strengthened alongside gaining an excellent academic, social, emotional and physical education.*

**We aim to:**

- provide an interesting and exciting curriculum within the national frameworks;
- promote a learning culture so that pupils engender a love of learning and the desire to continue to learn;
- give our pupils every opportunity to succeed;
- ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to take part in the life and work of the school; and
- make sure that assessment of pupils has a purpose at every level for everyone involved.

**A thematic approach to curriculum design:**

We believe that our curriculum should be enjoyable, rich, varied and challenging in order to engage and excite our children. We strive to meet the needs of all our pupils and ensure each and every child is able to fulfil their potential. We have developed a thematic curriculum which involves teaching the key skills of the National Curriculum using a thematic and creative approach. This new approach to the curriculum is a skills based approach. The intention is to give children and teaching staff more opportunity to explore their own creativity and to give the children more purpose for their learning. We aim to create independent thinkers who take ownership over their learning.

**Varied learning styles:**

Teachers offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. These include:

- investigation and problem solving;
- research and finding out;
- asking and answering questions;
- use of computer technology;
- creative activities;
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations; and
- designing and making things.

Throughout the day, pupils engage in whole-class work, group work, paired work and independent work. We aim for each session to include visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities so that pupils see, hear and do. We make good use of 'talk partners' and we model, encourage and praise cooperative learning.

### **Learning community:**

Parents and carers are our pupils' first and most influential educators. We believe that parents and carers have a fundamental role to play supporting the learning their children are engaged in at school.

We communicate with parents and carers in a variety of ways including newsletters, school reports, formal meetings and informal chats. We keep parents informed of successes and any concerns we may have. Teachers are always available to discuss issues as they arise. We have regular open evenings in school. We also hold specific workshops to support parents with learning at home, for example, a mathematical calculation workshop. Our website gives information about the school and celebrates recent events.

We encourage and respect pupil voice. We have a School Council which, makes recommendations and undertakes work to improve our school. All classes use circle time and/or class council to make sure children have opportunities to raise concerns and voice opinions. Children's opinions are regularly sought through questionnaires, discussions and suggestion boxes. SLT triangulation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review (MER) and Governor monitoring visits include pupil voice.

We have a whole host of regular visitors who contribute to our learning community including local church leaders, youth workers, community volunteers, The Multi Schools Council and our local librarian.

We provide a learning environment for training teachers from The Thames Valley School Centred Initial Teacher Training.

Performance Management is a well-established practice for all staff to reflect on their strengths and opportunities to develop skills and plan their professional development needs accordingly. We do all we can to support our staff in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice. Staff members are committed to their continuing professional development and attend in-house, Essex and other training.

Our governors monitor how effective teaching, learning and assessment strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment through the school self-review processes, whereby they focus on key school improvement areas. They are kept informed by visiting the school, actively taking part in monitoring exercises, as well as attending meetings and reading reports by the headteacher and other key staff.

### **Inclusion:**

Shenfield St Mary's Church of England Primary School is an inclusive school where the achievements, attitudes and well-being of every person in the school matter. This is made evident in our ethos and values. All staff instinctively attempt to overcome children's barriers to learning. We regard pupils equally in relation to their individual needs. As a staff, we constantly consider teaching style, environment, rules and expectations of behaviour to ensure that every child is feeling confident happy and secure. Recognising and celebrating success through assemblies, displays and performances is very important at St Mary's. We ensure that there is a broad range of opportunities for everyone to shine.

Children are grouped according to the aims of the lessons. For literacy and maths this is usually by academic ability, however throughout the day it may be mixed ability, by gender or friendships. Activities are adapted to meet learning needs. Our Inclusion Leader co-ordinates support for those with special educational needs or disabilities, with English as an Additional Language and entitled to the Pupil Premium Grant. We have an experienced team of learning support assistants who work closely with class teachers to offer additional support. We have good relationships with a range of other professionals and value their support and advice in meeting children's needs.

### **High expectations:**

We have high expectations of staff in terms of commitment and professionalism, classroom organisation and personal expectations of the children. Our classrooms are attractive learning environments. We change displays regularly to ensure that the classrooms and the communal areas reflect current and recent learning. The work of all children is displayed during the year. All classrooms are equipped with resources to support their learning.

We set academic targets for the children in each academic year and review these targets half termly through informal discussion with the headteacher and formally in pupil progress meetings. The quality of work expected

from the children is high. Non-academic targets are also set for individuals where appropriate and the whole school follows a Christian value every half term.

### **Assessment for learning:**

A Learning Outcome is shared (written and spoken) at the beginning and during each session so children understand the purpose of the lesson and at the end children are guided to assess their progress and discuss and often record how they have achieved. This is made meaningful to the children and differentiated through success and process criteria. Where appropriate, pupils are encouraged to select their own success criteria through self-assessment prior to starting independent activities.

Teachers are constantly assessing; they observe, ask questions and work with groups and individuals throughout the day. Teaching points, activities and support given is adapted as a result of ongoing assessment throughout each lesson and future planning is adapted. Work where possible is marked and appropriate feedback and next step comments are given to the child. Marking is a dialogue and teachers will clarify success towards achieving the learning outcome through a consistently applied colour coded system (green = fully achieved/confident; amber = partly achieved/getting there but not confident; red = not achieved/did not understand) and next step comments (these may include asking a question or giving a challenge) see Appendix A.

We also value summative assessments of learning, where the children are assessed against school set standards. We use a variety of tests and use the results intelligently to record progress and to predict future levels of achievement. Summative assessments are used as a guide and teacher assessment is the overriding summative assessment used.

Each term, teachers in Years 1 – 6 record the achievement of skills in reading, writing, maths, religious education and science for each individual pupil. This is recorded on individually against school descriptors linked to the national curriculum. To track pupil attainment, we use a system of steps. This performs the function of communicating progression and attainment in a simple format that may be aggregated to produce reports of overall and average progress. This is based on a carefully considered logical approach to assessment and follows on from the assessment system used in Early Years Foundation Stage.

The terminology has been selected for consistency and clarity.

Each year group has been broken down into four steps:

Below

Working Towards

Expected

Greater Depth

These four broad sections are detailed by:

- Below – Pupil learning is significantly below year group expectations.
- Working Towards – Pupil learning is below year group expectations. Learning has not been fully embedded.
- Expected – Pupil learning is fully focussed on the criteria for the year group. This is a teacher best fit decision, but indicates that pupils have achieved around 40-70% of the year group expectations.
- Greater Depth – Confidence in all of the criteria for the year group. Pupils have broadened and deepened their understanding of the year group expectations.

Teachers meet with senior leaders regularly to discuss assessment and to find ways to remove barriers to learning. Senior leaders meet to discuss any children who are not making progress and to plan additional support.

It is the aim in this school for the vast majority of children to be working at the expected standard by the end of the year, with a significant group working at greater depth.

## Science

Science is a systematic investigation of the physical, chemical and biological aspects of the world which relies on first hand experiences and on other sources of information. The scientific process and pupils' problem-solving activities will be used to deepen their understanding of the concepts involved. The main aspects of science to be studied will be determined by the programmes of study of the National Curriculum 2014. Through science, pupils at St Mary's Primary School will continue to deepen their respect, care and appreciation for the natural world and all of its phenomena.

Science pervades every aspect of our lives, and we will relate it to all areas of the curriculum. We will also ensure that pupils realise the positive contribution of both men and women to science and the contribution from those of other cultures. We will not only emphasise the positive effects of science on the world, but also include problems, which some human activities can produce.

Pupils will be taught to use scientific equipment safely during practical activities. Class Teachers and Learning Support Assistants will check equipment regularly and report any damage, taking defective equipment out of action. A risk assessment will be carried out for all practical activities; any perceived hazards will be reported to the Headteacher who will determine the appropriateness of the activity.

(See APPENDIX B)

### Out of hours learning (including homework):

The school encourages a range of out of hours learning opportunities. These may be provided by school staff, volunteer helpers or outside organisations. They may vary term to term according to expertise and time available. Examples include:

- Art and craft clubs
- Music club
- Gardening club
- Sports clubs

We consider learning at home to be highly important for child development:

- To encourage self-discipline and personal organisation;
- To bridge the gap between home and school; and
- To give parents a direct link with their child's learning at school, parents are the primary educators.

Teachers give homework appropriate to the ability and age of the child, which also aims to develop creativity and thinking skills. It is set once per week and parents/carers are encouraged to organise homework around the children's other interests. Homework increases as the children progress through the school but will include a maths activity, spelling and a topic focus each week. We expect children to read daily at home, whether that be a school book on loan, a newspaper or magazine of their own interest or by reading a book to a younger sibling.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

In order to effectively evaluate this policy, as a Governing Body we will ask ourselves the following questions on an annual basis or in light of any developments and changes in school:

- Are our aims being met?
- How can we tell?
- Have there been any difficulties? Why have they arisen?
- What have been the successes? What made these possible?









- What do parents and pupils think about our policy?
- Are there any local or national initiatives in which the school should join?
- How can the policy be improved?

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if government guidance changes.

### Shenfield St Mary's Church of England Primary School Marking and Feedback - Procedures

The aim of marking and feedback is to give constructive support to children in achieving their objectives, while maintaining self-esteem. The feedback should be linked to the next steps which will move the pupil to the next level/skill.

- Teachers must be clear about their teaching objective and the children about their learning outcome. This should be stated throughout each and every lesson.
- Teachers and children will use a main teaching outcome in age appropriate language as the title for every lesson: Can I ...?
- This is followed by learning outcomes in the form of success criteria in English for extended writing (except for Year 2 and Year 6 where appropriate).
- Marking is linked to the learning outcome and teaching objective.
- Marking and feedback comments should be focused on the process of the work, not just on the end product. Comments should set clear areas for development for pupils to focus on, either in the next lesson or over the next few days, for example, 'Use commas to extend your sentences'.
- All titles/'Can I' statements will be highlighted with green, amber or pink to indicate the child's understanding of the learning, marking codes will be applied when appropriate. **One in four activities** will receive written feedback with next steps for pupil progress in English. English writing expectations will be applied to writing across the curriculum. All other subjects will not receive written marking and feedback. Instead, work will be celebrated in an age appropriate manner and verbal feedback will be provided. In maths, work will be ticked if correct, a dot put in place if incorrect. Children will be given time to try again and a 'c' written to show it is a correction.
- Teachers need to allow children time to reflect and take action on the feedback/marking given in following lessons. Pupils will be given time to respond and make changes to their work if appropriate.
- Wherever possible feedback should be completed with the child and this could be verbal.
- A Marking Code is displayed in classrooms and work areas for pupils to reference.
- When appropriate the children can show their work to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher for praise.
- Work needs to be stuck into the pupils' book so that it is secure and in one easily accessible place.
- In the Autumn term, two in five in Year 1, three in five in Year 2 and 3, four in five in Year 4 to 6 activities should be evidenced in books. In the Spring term, three in five in Year 1 and 2, four in five in Year 3 to 6 activities should be evidenced in books

	<p>LSA has supported learning, additional asterixis will be added to indicate the level of support provided.</p>
	<p>Next steps comments should either be based on the objective and tell the child what the need to do to develop their work or a key skill that is linked to the objective.</p>
<p>Highlight</p>	<p><b>Green</b> – They have achieved the objective.  <b>Amber</b> – They have partially achieved the objective.  <b>Red</b> – They have not understood or been able to achieve the objective.</p>
<p><b>P</b></p>	<p>Punctuation needed. The 'P' could be placed in the margin if space limited.</p>
	<p>Punctuation not needed. The crossed 'P' could be placed in the margin if space limited.</p>
<p><b>C</b></p>	<p>Capital letter needed.</p>
	<p>Capital letter not needed.</p>
	<p>Sentence break needed.</p>
	<p>Paragraph break needed.</p>
	<p>The writing is illegible or the meaning is unclear.</p>
	<p>The incorrect spelling is underlined and the 'sp' is written next to it, or in the margin.</p>

## APPENDIX B

### Health & Safety

The following are possible areas where children may be putting themselves in some danger if not forewarned. This list, by its very nature, cannot be exhaustive, but most of it is straight forward common sense. When working first hand with real materials there will always be some risk. Teachers need to be sure that they have considered the safety implications of any piece of work, and organised the class and the activity appropriately to minimise any risk to the children and themselves.

- When handling real materials children must wash their hands after they have finished the activity before they do anything else.
- When observing (using all their senses), or investigating, children should not eat or drink anything unless it has been prepared hygienically and has been deemed safe by the teacher.
- Children should not aim to lift or carry anything that could damage their backs or other parts of their body.
- Children should not exercise strenuously and then lie down on their backs.
- Children should not handle material that is decaying unless they are properly protected i.e. wearing protective gloves. Even if this is the case, great care must be taken to ensure that children do not breathe in micro-organisms associated with the decay. **If in any doubt** the teacher must collect the decaying material and put it in a sealed container, which must not/cannot be opened by the children, or set up an investigation in such a way that when the material being investigated is sealed in the container it is not decaying, and the decay develops afterwards.
- When handling animals or plants, teachers must be aware if there is any risk to the children through disease or being stung, bitten, etc. It is also essential for the teacher to emphasise the need for the children not to hurt or damage living things being studied, be it in the classroom or in the field.
- When investigating materials and comparing their properties, teachers must be aware of how the materials may react to being bent, or stressed in some other way, so that appropriate safety precautions can be put in place. For example, if different materials or structures are being tested to see the force required to break them, the work should probably be carried out close to the floor so that heavy weights do not fall on the children's legs or feet. The teacher also needs to be aware whether the broken material will splinter or shatter or react in some other way that may be potentially dangerous to the child.
- Equally, when heating materials, teachers must be aware of the risk posed by the material itself, the appliance used to heat it (e.g. flames, electric rings etc.) the cable running from the plug to the appliance if it has one, and how the material will be dealt with after the investigation.
- Children need to be reminded of the dangers posed by electricity every time they do any electrical activity. They also need to be taught about the dangers of short circuits, which can produce nasty burns, even when using low voltage (1.5v) batteries.
- When investigating forces using springs, elastic bands, or when launching projectiles through the air, children must be reminded of the need to carry out such work in an area where they or others will not be inadvertently 'hit'.

This list highlights the areas of most obvious danger. There are doubtless omissions, so teachers must always remember to consider safety before carrying out any work with children. Each unit of the QCA lists safety precautions which need to be taken into account when planning.

### For further guidance:-

- The school follows the advice published in 'Be Safe' as recommended by the Essex Local Authority. Teachers need to make risk assessment for situations not covered in 'Be Safe'. The booklet will be kept in the science section of the staff room library.
- Pupils will be made aware of safety issues that arise in topics or activities and will be trained to use the appropriate equipment and carry out tasks in a safe and responsible manner.
- Code of practice 25