

The Catholic School of Saint Gregory The Great

Believe and Achieve



POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR IDENTIFYING AND WORKING WITH CHILDREN WHO ARE DEEPER LEVEL LEARNERS

To be reviewed by March 2025

Aims & rationale

We have designed a curriculum that is broad, balanced and specific to the needs of our children. Our curriculum focuses on mastering skills across the curriculum so all children acquire a secure understanding, where they aim to work within age related expectations as well as striving to show greater depth. We plan our teaching and learning in such a way to ensure that each child reaches their full potential and are well prepared for the next stages of their education and adult life. This policy helps to ensure that we recognise and support the needs of all children in our school as well as those who have been identified as 'working at greater depth within age related expectations'. We strive for each and every child to be the best they can be in each subject and each area of that subject.

Our Learning Culture

As a Catholic school we recognise that all children have gifts and talents that must be uncovered and then nurtured. We have a Growth Mindset culture where both children and teachers believe that success in learning can be achieved through hard work, effort and persistence, rather than being 'fixed' by innate ability. We work to develop the following attributes of our learners: pride, continuous improvement, resilience, inspiration, taking responsibility, reflection, perseverance, learning from mistakes, risk taking, trying your best, confidence, and positivity. We believe that achievement can be both academic, social and emotional and recognised broadly across an entire area of the curriculum or specifically with a bite-sized objective. We have high expectations of all pupils and teach for deep and sustainable learning across the curriculum.

With a learning culture such as this, we believe that every child is on a journey to mastering skills and knowledge and that each child is at a different point on that journey (across different subjects, or one fact, or a specific skills-based objective). We communicate to children that we can all be deeper learners and explain that we all have strengths which will surface at different times. Therefore, within our teaching, we use the following terminology:

'Learning at Greater Depth' are pupils who continuously grasp and skilfully apply new learning. Depth of Learning is not just knowing a fact, but it is using that fact in increasingly more difficult situations. Learners who are working at greater depth are able to reason and explain their learning and apply it to different scenarios. On occasions, a child may be learning at greater depth within a specific objective or concept but not across the whole area of the curriculum. For this reason, all children have the opportunity to be exposed to deeper learning tasks within each learning session. This removes the 'perception of a glass ceiling' from those children who are not always applying new learning quickly. At St Gregory's, pupils working at greater depth are expected to be able to:

- Apply their learning to different contexts, identifying relationships within the subject and between other areas of the curriculum.
- Work independently, showing resilience.
- Apply their skills and knowledge consistently and fluently.
- Explain and reason using accurate vocabulary.
- Show curiosity and take responsibility for deepening their own learning by asking questions.
- Teach others what they have learnt in a sensitive and thoughtful way to enable them to learn too.

'Rapid Graspers' can refer to anyone in class who regularly understand new concepts or particular objectives quickly and are able to apply their knowledge to demonstrate their understanding. Every child can grasp a concept readily and therefore need to be given appropriate challenge and support to master a concept. When a learner shines and demonstrates that they 'get it' then teachers adapt, respond, vary work and take the learning deeper. Each lesson will have 'rapid graspers' but who they are will vary as confidence ebbs and flows.

'Previous High Attainers' - There are some children who have attained highly in previous year groups through statutory or non-statutory testing. These children are tracked (as all children are tracked) to ensure that where they have been learning at greater depth, they continue to strive to continuously reach their potential. This is useful to ensure good progress continues. These children are identified through in-house assessments and also through statutory end of key stage assessments where they will have shown that they have reached

'working at greater depth within ARE (age related expectations)' for reading, writing and mathematics combined.

'*Depth of learning and Deeper Learners*' is measured using formative and summative assessment. Each core subject objective taught to the pupils is tracked and assessed on our in-house tracking system using a colour and number code. Where an objective has been achieved, it is numbered '2' which shows up on analysis as 'green' and where the teacher feels it has been learnt at greater depth, it is tracked as '3' and coloured 'blue'.

Identification of children who are deeper level learners

The number coding from our assessment for learning leads to a summative assessment of whether a child is consistently deeper learning. Three times a year, this is recorded as an overall teacher judgement based upon 'average depth of learning' (numbered 3 for deeper learner) so that depth of learning is judged over time within subject areas. Children who are consistently deeper level learners would usually have an average depth of learning of over 2.5 average depth, although this is informed by a range of aspects including attainment, consistency of attainment, professional judgement, observations and is a complex judgement to make. This is moderated by Senior Leaders to ensure consistency and accuracy.

This does not mean that a learner who has an average depth of approximately 2 cannot or does not learn at greater depth, it is simply that they show it on occasion or in specific aspects of the subject rather than across a wide range of areas of the subject.

Pupil progress meetings with phase leaders three times yearly ensure that all children are learning at least the depth of learning that was common for them in the previous year. Additional challenge is provided where this is not the case and these children may be the focus of a case study or TAF meeting where this is felt appropriate.

A child's ability to record should not be a barrier to being able to show a child is learning at greater depth and it is our responsibility to be able to seek out evidence of this in a range of ways. Also, that a child may have a real passion and affinity for one area of a subject but not another e.g.: deep knowledge about artists and their techniques yet an inability to portray these themselves due to coordination difficulties for example.

We also recognise that children who are consistently deeper level learners can be:

- Deeper level learners across the entire curriculum
- Deeper learners in one area
- Learners who have the ability to learn deeply but have low motivation
- Learners who have good verbal ability but poor writing/recording skills
- Learners who can learn deeply but have a short attention span or poor social skills
- Learners who have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities
- Keen to disguise their abilities

We also recognise that children have social and emotional strengths or may have mastered the art of social skills in comparison with their peers – these are recognised through our weekly Celebration and Values Assemblies and SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) assessments, as well as being noted on annual reports and through parent teacher reviews which discuss their attributes as a learner and a citizen.

Techniques within our classrooms to support growth mindset and deeper level learning

In our classrooms, you will see a range of teaching strategies that we use to ensure we are teaching for a secure understanding and encouraging deeper learning. This will include some or all of the following within different lessons. In different subjects, we are on an earlier or latter part of the teaching for mastery journey on altering our teaching methods and understanding of what deeper level tasks and learning look like.

You may see all/some of the following dependent upon subject:

- Adaptive teaching to ensure depth of learning
- Mixed ability pairings and table seating to allow children to teach others

- Bite-sized objectives / small steps which are coherent and build on previous learning
- Modelling and explaining
- Retrieval opportunities to ensure learning is embedded and learners know and remember more
- Teachers and Teaching Partners that have high expectations for all pupils
- Tasks that are designed to take account of levels of existing knowledge, skills and understanding
- Opportunities to apply and demonstrate learning through problem solving
- Depth of tasks – referred to as ‘go deep’ and ‘go deeper’ tasks
- School clubs and extra-curricular enrichment opportunities offered to those who are passionate about and work hard in a curriculum area
- Opportunities for performance to apply skills
- Specialist teaching
- Children crafting their own tasks so that they’re able to lead part of the lesson or activity
- Variation theory at work where children show their understanding in lots of different ways
- Question stems which really search for and test knowledge and understanding
- Stem sentences and generalised statements to support and develop reasoning.
- The use of misconceptions and mistakes as teaching points – ‘what it is not’
- Partnership with secondary schools for teaching, learning, resource sharing, specialist knowledge and moderation opportunities
- National schemes/competitions/festivals to celebrate and apply skills
- Subject leader policies will make reference to techniques in specific subjects

Each curriculum area has an implementation plan which includes provision for those children who are deeper learners and strives to help children be masters of their learning. For example, in art we aspire to be artists through our growth mindset approach.

Responsibilities and monitoring

It is the responsibility of every member of staff to:

- Maintain an ethos where it is encouraged to have high aspirations and excel
- Encourage all pupils to be independent learners
- Recognise achievement, without focusing solely on attainment but on the effort across the learning
- Be aware of the effects of ethnicity, bilingualism, gender and social circumstances on learning and high achievement
- Provide a wide range of experiences
- Provide work at an appropriate level yet always recognise the possibility that more could be achieved
- Provide opportunities for all pupils to work with like-minded peers and also to inspire others

Class teachers are responsible for digging deeper with learning in their classroom and Subject Leaders are responsible for the training and monitoring of deeper learning within their own curriculum area. This is done through observations, book looks, planning scrutinies, pupil conferencing and data trawls.

The policy will be reviewed annually through the Curriculum Committee.