



Teaching and Learning Policy 2024-2025

God's Love in Action

Our children are at the heart of everything we do through **Christian values and relationships**. **Living and learning together** we celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of everyone in our family. We nurture a sense of **self belief, mutual respect and belonging** through Social Emotional Learning and academic excellence. We are dedicated to building the foundations for **happy and successful life-long learning**.

Introduction

At St Thomas we have constructed a curriculum which prepares the children of St Thomas academically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. We use a sequential knowledge curriculum that begins in EYFS, so that students can successfully access a broad and balanced curriculum throughout their education at St Thomas. This is underpinned by structured phonics, writing and mathematics lessons in EYFS to ensure core procedural knowledge is secured and that transition into KS1 is successful.

Our curriculum is designed to recognise children's prior learning, both from previous settings and their experiences at home. We work in partnership with parents, carers, and other settings to provide the best possible start at St Thomas ensuring everyone reaches their full potential from their various starting points. It has been designed to enable children to succeed through engaging and enriching learning opportunities.

Core principles of learning

Introduction to the core principles about how we learn.

The cognitive science of learning is the place where curriculum and assessment meet teaching and learning. We need to understand how the brain works to be able to plan and teach lessons so that pupils don't forget what we have taught them. We know that our working memory is very limited (typically holding up to seven items for 30 seconds) whereas our long-term memory is effectively limitless. Consequently, at St Thomas we are committed to eight key principles of learning:

1. Learning is a change in long-term memory.
2. Working memory is weak.
3. Knowledge is the pathway to skill.
4. Memory is the residue of thought.
5. Deliberate practice is essential to closing the knowing-doing gap.
6. Responsive teaching makes the right memories.
7. Transfer is hard.
8. Student motivation is also critical to learning

Developing great teaching and learning

We believe that outstanding provision is the result of an accumulation of strategies and techniques that fit within the principles of teaching above. This combined with a strong understanding of the cognitive science behind learning combined provides the foundation for exemplary teaching and learning.

We believe that teaching is practice that can be taught, and that practise makes permanent.

Therefore, our approach for developing effective teaching and learning is centred around the refinement of great practice.

1) Universal Quality First Teaching (embedded within all classrooms) Teacher / Subject Leads / Curriculum / LA's									
Structured, pre-planned and prepared sequence of lessons. ↓ CUSP resources and Learning Questions	Positive, high expectations, and aspirations for all. ↓ Specific praise and reward Behaviour Policy / Classroom Routine	Explicit Vocab teaching and choice of language. ↓ Knowledge organisers, vocabulary mats / strips, dual coding	Explicit Modelling and demonstration ↓ My turn Our turn Your turn working walls	Clear chunked instructions supported with visuals / actions	Multi-sensory activities ↓ manipulatives	Review, repeat, recall, retrieve ↓ Do now	Frequent checking of understanding ↓ retrieval practice cumulative quizzing	Flexible groupings ↓ Talk partners, LA or teacher working with specific groups	Accurate and continued assessment ↓ constructive and instant feedback at the point of learning



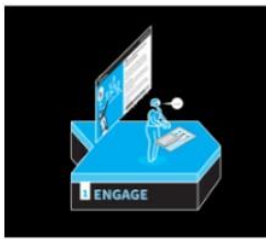
Developing great teachers

All our teachers receive instructional coaching fortnightly with a trained coach on the senior leadership team. Coaching is a great thing, and we want as many people as possible can have access to coaching. As part of our commitment to quality training and developing every member of staff that joins us, all teachers and leaders will have access to coaching as part of their development. The purpose of this coaching or Instructional Leadership, is to develop teachers at all levels of experience into dependably excellent classroom practitioners.

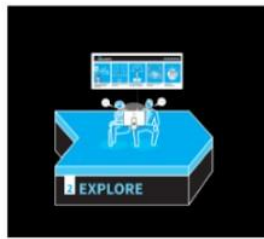
Coaching observations take place once a fortnight for 10-15 minutes. Whilst the lesson/class being observed can change over time, it is expected that the same lesson/class be observed for a minimum of twice per half term. After an observation the class teacher will meet the following week with their coach to discuss feedback. Each feedback session uses the Walkthru strategy approach to instruction coaching.

5Es WALKTHRU_s IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

1 2 3 4 5



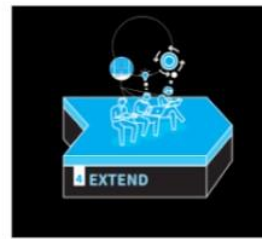
ENGAGE



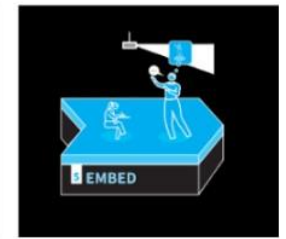
EXPLORE



EVALUATE



EXTEND



EMBED

We have followed the implementation plan set up by the Walkthru creators, Tom Sherrington and Oliver Caviglioli. Whole school training was delivered using the materials provided by the Walkthru creators and personal coaching plans were then set up for all teachers in 2022.

RUNNING A CPD MEETING

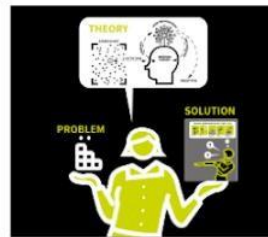
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REVIEW PROGRESS SINCE LAST MEETING



PLAN NEW INPUTS RESPONSIVELY



DELIVER INPUTS LINKING THEORY TO PRACTICE



DISCUSS IMPLEMENTATION INCLUDING CONCERNS & BARRIERS



SET GOALS AND A TIME FRAME

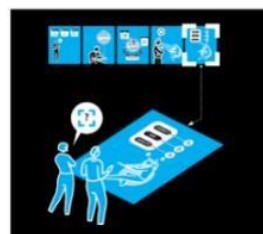
A cycle of continuous CPD has been developed to allow teachers to develop excellent classroom practices using a sequential set of techniques. Each session with a coach follows a format, which sets concrete steps to an action and diarised drop ins and meetings to ensure they are kept to.

FEEDBACK IN INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

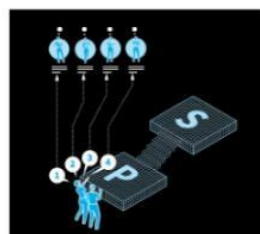
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PROVIDE PRECISE PRAISE



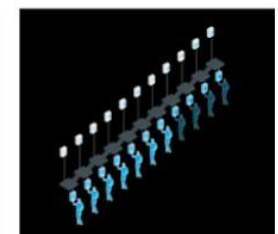
PROBE



IDENTIFY PROBLEM & CONCRETE ACTION STEP



PRACTISE

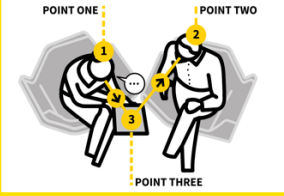


PLAN AHEAD; SET TIMELINE

Precise praise is given to the teacher to highlight achievements on the current action, both the coach and teacher then probe deeper into a relevant teaching strategy in order to identify any concerns or problems within the classroom. Once this is identified, a concrete action is set using the Walkthru strategies. This

is modelled by the coach and practiced by the teacher before planning a time for the coach to drop in and watch the Walkthru in action. After this, the process begins again and continues the cycle, clustering various strategies together as the confidence of the teacher grows.

FEEDBACK 1
Tap the + icon in the top left corner to insert additional feedback pages to your digital journal.



AFTER THE OBSERVATION

- 1 Using three-point communication, review the observation with your observer.
- 2 Complete the feedback table with your observer/coach.

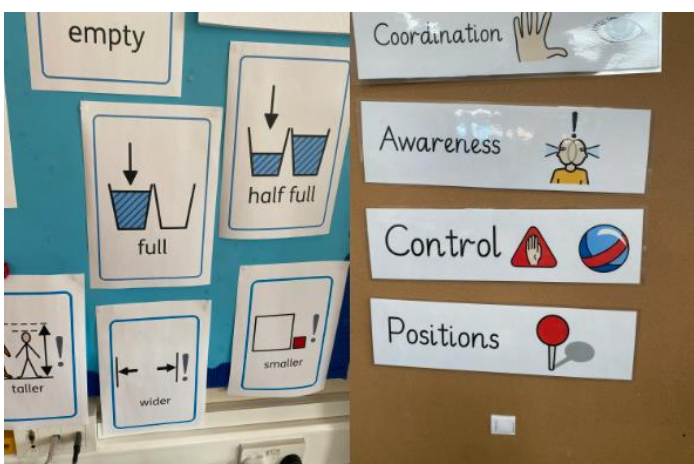
STEP	RESPONSE
PROVIDE PRECISE PRAISE Which precise aspects of the walkthru(s) are having a positive impact - how can you tell? Give specific examples.	
PROBE Where are students still finding challenges? Which aspects of the techniques are not yet happening or embedded? What difficulties are there in enacting the action steps?	
IDENTIFY PROBLEM AND ACTION STEP Focus on a specific area. What exact problem is a priority to address? What action steps will go towards addressing that problem. Refer to the walkthrus steps for guidance.	
PRACTISE Name it. Run through the steps in the technique. Where helpful, rehearse key elements. What actions might you take? What instructions, questions might help?	
PLAN AHEAD & SET TIMELINE - Date of next opportunity to practise the techniques - Date when the coach will next observe a lesson - Date of next coaching session	

Equal Opportunities

The delivery and content of lessons should be sufficiently differentiated to ensure all pupils can access and achieve within the curriculum. Teachers must take account of SEND, gifted and talented, and language stage needs when planning and teaching lessons to ensure learning opportunities are provided which match pupils' ability and potential.

Our teachers are supported in achieving this by having access to the following resources:

- Speech and language targets by the BCHC
- In Print symbols and dual coding displays
- Precision teaching training and materials
- A2E toolkit
- Little Wandle sensory SEND resources



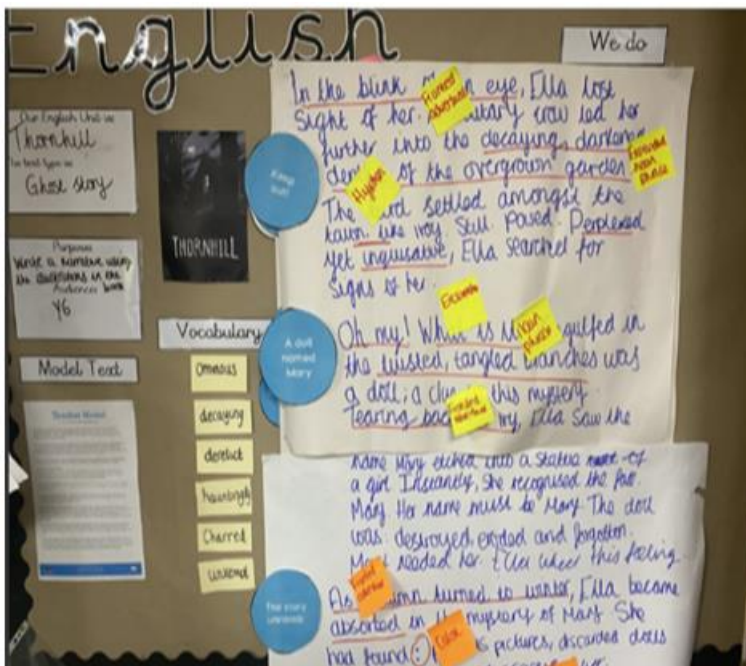
Additional support is provided to identified pupils so all children can access the curriculum and fulfil their potential. Support may be given to assist pupils with special educational needs, to pupils who speak English as an additional language or to extend those with a specific need.

Displays

We use display to support, reinforce and celebrate learning. Display should aid recall, stimulate further thinking, give new information, make connections, celebrate achievement, remind children of rules and targets, and motivate children towards further learning.

Each class across school should have:

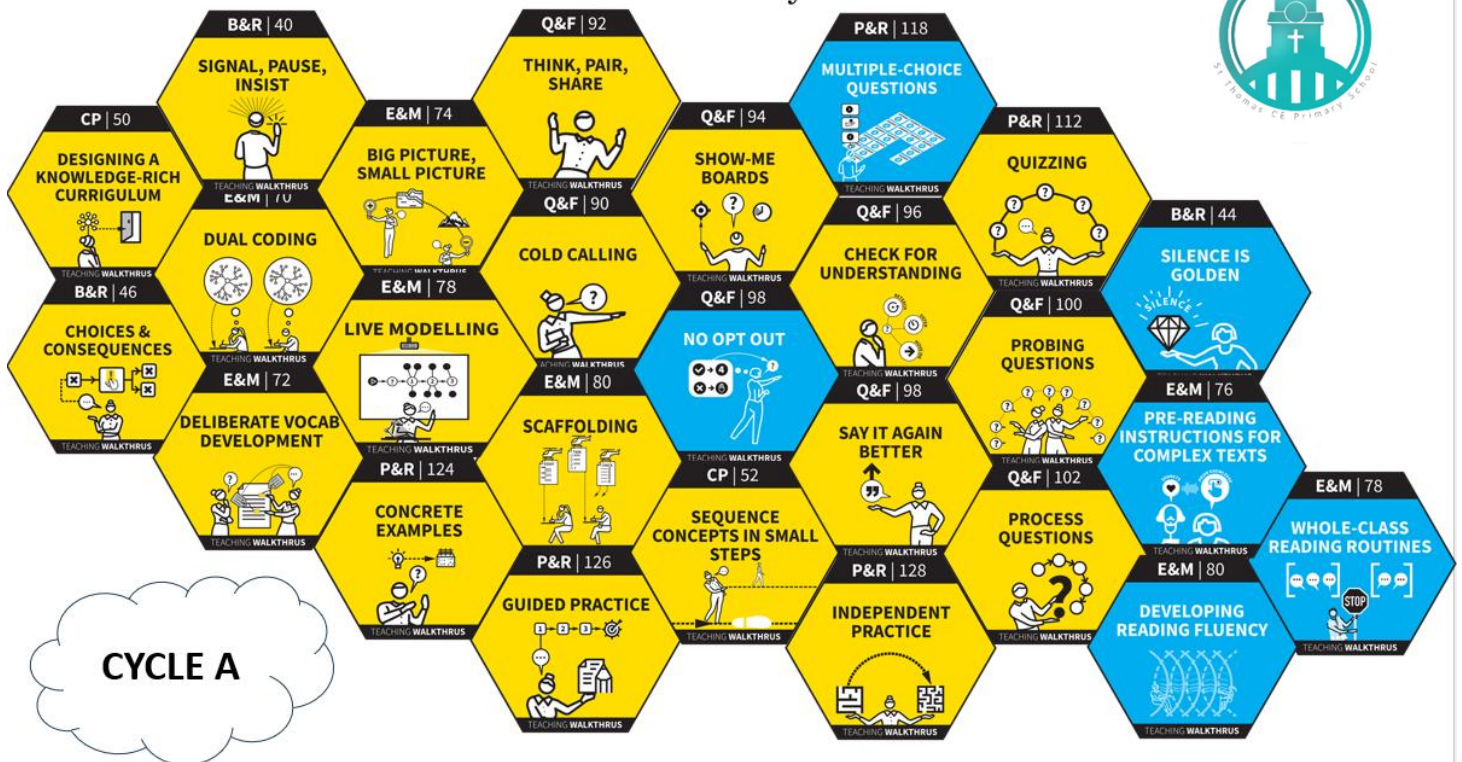
- A working wall for English featuring the focus text which is annotated with relevant information to support the learning (where relevant.)
- Modelled examples illustrating the Talk 4 Writing process.
- A Maths display mainly promoting conceptual understanding around number and must include either concrete, pictorial or abstract.
- Wider curriculum displays that use captions to effectively generate interest and key vocabulary from the unit of work. The Big Question is clearly displayed.
- School rules displayed.
- Visual timetable on display always during the day using symbols where appropriate.
- Esteem raising well-presented displays of high-quality children's work that reflects their achievements.
- A reading corner, which children can access high-quality texts from in their classroom.
- Behaviour recognition chart with children's names on.
- Reading display with reading monsters and sentence stems.



The use of open and closed questioning is vital to teaching and learning. Questions are used to assess children’s starting points, to deepen understanding and to check children’s progress.

A range of question types should be used from literal to higher order. Children must always be given thinking time and a range of strategies are employed in this school to facilitate a ‘no hands up’ approach: think-pair-share, cold calling, show me boards and randomisers. We teach children how to raise their own questions and how to use a range of techniques to find the answers to questions that have been posed.

St Thomas CE Academy Clusters



Feedback and marking

Feedback and marking have been developed to ensure children understand more and remember more. Allowing them to focus on the next steps to develop further. This takes various forms such as feedback as actions, class discussion, live marking, whole class feedback, use of success criteria and redrafting. More information is available in our feedback and marking policy.

Assessment

Assessment lies at the heart of the process of promoting children's learning. Teachers use a range of AFL techniques such as low stakes quizzes, retrieval games and multiple-choice questions.

Summative assessment is completed through end of unit quizzes within the wider curriculum and NFER/White Rose testing within the core subjects. Where appropriate teachers use Collins fluency assessments or Little Wandle phonics assessments.

Non-core subjects use the CUSP assessments. The knowledge and vocabulary are assessed through the end of unit quizzes and the application of this with their skills are then assessed through daily AFL and their learning journals. This gives the teacher an overall understanding of the child's learning.

Study Summary Assessment:

Knowledge and vocabulary acquired

Test / quiz assessment	End of Unit		
	Low >60%	Mid 60 -75%	High <75 - 100%
%			
Pupil names			

Teacher assessment of knowledge, skills and vocabulary applied

Present knowledge (Working towards expected standard)	Operate on and with knowledge (Working at expected standard)	Conceptual understanding with depth (Greater depth of understanding)

Teaching assistants and support

Each phase team has assigned teaching assistants; teachers are responsible for the effective direction and deployment of TAs to support learning. Teachers hold regular planning and feedback meetings with TAs and are responsible for ensuring learning intentions and activities are clear. Teaching assistants follow the school feedback and marking policy as directed by their class teacher.

Governors

Our governors monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment through the school local authority board meetings. They are kept informed by visiting the school, as well as attending these meetings and reading reports by the Head teacher and other key staff.

Governors meet with subject leaders or senior leaders every term to discuss various responsibilities and actions that have been discussed within the local board meetings.

Homework

It is vital that a strong partnership is built with parents and homework gives the chance for parents to become involved in their child's learning.

Homework gives the opportunity to reinforce what has been covered in lessons, practise a skill or to introduce a new topic. Our school uses CGP SATs workbooks for year 2 and year 6. Home readers are given out weekly, matched the child's reading level and reading journals are filled in by parents or the older children, detailing what and how they read; these are checked by the class teacher or teaching assistant.

Pupil voice

We encourage and respect pupil voice. We have a School Council which meets regularly and makes recommendations and undertakes work to improve our school. We have an anti-bullying ambassador group, who are currently working on raising awareness of negative behaviours and what we can do as a school to prevent them. Children's opinions are regularly sought through questionnaires and discussions.

Pupil book study is conducted half termly for core subjects and termly for wider curricular subjects. These are collated alongside the monitoring matrix for each subject, which allows both subject leaders and senior leaders to have a clear understanding of each subjects' strengths and development points.

Provision monitoring, insights and questions

Autumn Term		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
		SPD	non-SPD	SPD	non-SPD	SPD	non-SPD	SPD	non-SPD
CHECK IN and CHECK BACK	Are concepts visible?								
IDENTIFIES	Is there the opportunity to connect prior knowledge?								
ROUTINES and EXPECTATIONS	Do pupils use and mark up their Knowledge Organiser?								
• Is what you expect to be in place <u>actually</u> happening?	Are Knowledge Notes used and marked up?								
ENABLES	Do pupils reference or use the Learning question?								
• CONSISTENCY: refinement and improvements	Is there vocabulary instruction?								
• STRENGTHS: do more of this – share best practice	Are the 6 phases of a lesson used?								
	Is there scaffolding for First 20s?								
	Are vocabulary questions used?								
	Do pupils have a range of explanatory diagrams / Inpage prompts?								
	Are Thinking Science Tasks used / responded to?								
	Do pupils work scientifically?								
	Are variables taught and used?								
	Where relevant, are significant scientists studied?								
	Do pupils frequently retrieve through quizzes?								
	Does feedback clarify, motivate and challenge pupils?								
	Is science enriched through visits / visitors or wider curriculum connections?								

Routine in place and used effectively.
Routine seen in an early stage of development or superficial.
Routine not used or implementation may be ineffective.

Date: 12th November 2020 Study: Geography – physical processes Class: Year 4 Australia Class Teacher: Mr X		Helping		Hindering		Actions to be reviewed on 3rd December 2020
		Strong	Developing plus	Developing minus	Limitation	
STRUCTURE	Content and knowledge		✓			Notes Knowledge and content clearly articulated through structure with knowledge organiser and knowledge notes provided direction and clarity. Lessons sequenced thoughtfully and cumulatively. Pupils sequenced thoughtfully and flicked back to show and connect/reuse prior learning. T2/T3 words were present but not explicitly taught. The approach to teaching vocabulary requires further structure and clarity around words taught.
	Teaching sequence		✓			
	Vocabulary		□	✓		
PARTICIPATION	Explanation and modelling		✓			Pupils used worked examples and the KO and KNs supported them to acquire foundational knowledge. Tasks were completed by pupils and they generally explain the process. The majority focused on copying rather than constructing and retrieving/using what they were learning about. Pupils needed prompts to reliably or accurately remember the content. Feedback given was understood and acted on by pupils. They could explain how feedback helped and were able to show examples of that – questions were responded to.
	Tasks		□	✓		
	Questioning and retrieval		□	✓		
	Feedback		✓			
DIFFERENCE (SPD)	1. Vocabulary – teach two or three words explicitly to pupils at the start of every lesson. Constantly refer to the vocabulary on the working wall and make connections through explanations and dialogue (see Y1).					
	2. Tasks – once modelled, use partially completed diagrams to support pupils in retrieving and remembering the taught content (see Y5).					
	3. Questioning and retrieval – use 'Just Two Things' within a lesson as well as question stems focusing on taught content to support pupils with retrieval and self-questioning (connect with Year 5 examples).					

Parents and carers

We actively encourage the participation of parents as partners in learning and aim to create a welcoming atmosphere.

Parents are informed of their children's targets during 2 parent's evenings annually and an optional drop in at the end of the academic year.

Three official parent/teacher meetings are held across the year, but parents are entitled to make an appointment to see the teacher at other times. Teachers are expected to raise any concerns about a child's learning or behaviour with parents as soon as possible so that work can be done in partnership to resolve issues.

A range of learning opportunities are provided to parents and opportunities to observe the learning in lessons through Inspire workshops, celebration assemblies and parent coffee mornings.

Our PTA group was started in September 2024 with parent volunteers to target how we can work further as a community and maintain our school fairs, coffee mornings and charity fundraisers.