

# All Saints' C. of E. Primary School



## Mastery and Greater Depth

### Aim

At All Saints' we agree that there are many definitions for mastery which could be implemented in different ways, e.g. Shanghai Maths. The aim of this document is to present what we as a staff have distilled as the essence of our approach at All Saints'. More importantly we do not race through the curriculum, but ensure there are opportunities for pupils to master the objectives and not just cover them. This approach is followed across all subjects.

### Background

We embrace the approach of mastery and greater depth. We interpret four stages to our approach. This language is not used when reporting attainment, as a pupil might have mastered one area of a subject, but none of the others.

1. Shallow Learning: surface learning which is temporary and often lost.
2. Working to Expectations: with support being able to work to the objectives of the national curriculum.
3. Mastery: when a greater level of understanding is obtained, being able to work independently and explain ways of working.
4. Greater Depth: when learning is obtained and transferred into different contexts and more demanding reasoning problems are tackled.

### Key Aspects

- The first key aspect is the move away from boosting pupils up through levels and ahead of the rest of the cohort without embedding the necessary deeper understanding. To do this we create opportunities for **deeper understanding** where we expect pupils to reason and think more deeply than before. We ensure that children's knowledge is embedded deeply as part of everyday practice with class discussions making links across the curriculum. We ensure there are opportunities for pupils to master the objectives and not just cover them. We encourage class talk which supports the thinking process, reasoning about methods and sharing insights with peers.
- To this end we make use of **mixed ability** working procedures like talk partners and mixed seating. Research widely acknowledges the detrimental effect on progress when abilities are "set" or "streamed." Research also suggests that ability grouping can have a longer term negative effect on the attitudes and engagement of middle and low attaining pupils. Though the average impact of setting or streaming on low attaining pupils is negative, evidence suggests that certain types of grouping are more effective than others. Some studies have shown that reducing the size of the lowest attaining groups and assigning high-performing teachers to these groups can be effective, as can providing additional targeted catch up support. We include this in our practice. High attaining pupils are extended in class by working at greater depth and receiving further challenge tasks. Importantly we acknowledge the benefit to these pupils to take on the teacher role with peers and to verbalise their understanding of concepts (concrete or abstract). Out of the classroom they are also extended with initiatives like the Maths 24 Games Tournament, KS2 Word of Mouth and others.
- Under Mastery we think differently about **differentiation**. We scaffold learning for pupils who work with support (e.g. word banks, writing frames, physical objects in maths). This is to enable all to access learning. We run same day interventions. We celebrate mistakes as an integral part of learning. We move learning on from the concrete to the abstract. We teach pupils the concept of neuroplasticity, which is the ability of the brain to adapt to new ways of learning and memory. We use feedback in the form of marking, verbal feedback and peer-to-peer discussion to support pupil's understanding. We provide the correct type of intervention for potentially vulnerable pupils. We ensure misconceptions are identified earlier and recognise barriers to learning and support learners through them.
- We build in **metacognition** (thinking about their thinking) and **self-regulation** (managing their own thinking) as a key skill for our children. Critical thinking skills are also taught. The ability to give and receive feedback, and particularly peer-to-peer feedback, is taught. We use strategies such as 'pre-teaching' and 'pre-assessment'. We improve our quality of questioning, but also expect pupils to do the same. We set milestones in the form of success criteria and targets.

### Conclusion

The school will continue to monitor the impact of this approach, both through qualitative and quantitative evidence. We will continue to draw on best practices already in use at All Saints' to deliver the best outcomes for pupils.