



Summary of School Development Plan (SDP) 2018/2019

At St Louis we have high expectations of ourselves and for our school community as we know that a child's life chances are determined by how well they do at school; both academically and emotionally. In the last two years we have been focusing on our school expansion, ensuring the security of Catholic education but also providing a school for the 21st century that is better able to meet the needs of the families it serves. This has been an exciting time but also a challenging one. At the same time, school budgets have been cut drastically and this has placed an added pressure on us. During this period of change we have worked hard to ensure that despite the challenges, high academic standards are maintained and all the big school events that parents have come to expect still take place and are done to a high standard. Now that the building work is complete it is time to reflect and 'take stock' of where our school is on its journey of improvement.

One of the ways we do this is by undertaking a 'self-evaluation' of strengths and weaknesses and then writing a plan of actions (the school development plan). This ensures the school leadership team stay focused on the most important priorities. We know that there is a lot about our school that is very good but we never take this for granted or are complacent. We know that with a growing school and the difficulties in recruiting new staff we all have to keep working hard together to ensure our high standards are maintained. Since our last inspection the Ofsted framework has changed several times and it is acknowledged that the 'bar has been raised further'. Equally the challenges placed on the school by its expansion to a two form entry school mean that the school has to constantly evaluate what it does, how it does it and how effective it is. As a National Support School our Leadership team are also asked to support other schools and this creates an added pressure and increased work load for our school.

We have summarised our school development plan below for you so you know what we are working on. The plan has been written in consultation with staff, and Governors, and will be implemented between the Autumn term 2017 and Dec 2019. It follows on from the previous plan which formally ended in December 2017. The SDP does not include all that the school will be doing but it does focus on the most important things that will improve the school further.

Our plan will:

- Give St Louis a strategic direction for the next 18 months
- Help keep us focused on the main priorities for the school
- Continue to raise standards in achievement and attainment
- Ensure that leadership and management of the school is always very effective
- Enable the budget to be set effectively
- Provide a framework for the professional development of all staff
- Assist the school in responding to DFE/LA/Diocesan initiatives

Underpinning the School improvement plan are 10 key points for an improving school:

- ❖ Shared Goals - 'We know where we are going'
- ❖ Responsibility for success - 'We must succeed'
- ❖ Collegiality - 'We're working on this together'
- ❖ Continuous improvement - 'We can get better'
- ❖ Lifelong learning - 'Learning is for everyone'
- ❖ Risk taking - 'We learn by trying something new'

- ❖ Support - 'There's always someone there to help'
- ❖ Mutual respect - 'Everyone has something to offer'
- ❖ Openness - 'We can discuss our differences'
- ❖ Celebration and humour - 'We feel good about ourselves'

(Stoll and Fink 1996)

What we want to improve further about our school:

Our evaluation process has helped us divide our ideas and actions for improvement into two main areas: 'entitlement' and 'enhancement'. By 'entitlement' we mean are we providing the basics to a good standard? These are all those things that our children are entitled to e.g. phonics teaching in the Early Years and Key Stage 1, learning to read, being safe in school, high standards of behaviour. For a school to be effective it has to get all of these things right. The second area is 'enhancement'. By this we mean what are we doing over and above the 'basics' that is extra or different to other schools? What is it about our school that is distinctive and does not happen as a matter of course in other schools? Included in this would be things such as drama, singing and performance, our Buddy system and pupil development and leadership opportunities for our children.

In evaluating ourselves we need to ask the following questions: Are we doing enough? Are we doing them well? If improvements can be made are we making them? This is where our school development plan comes in.

Our Priorities:

School Priority 1: Strengthen the leadership of the school so that it is fit for purpose when the school is full to capacity i.e. 420 children on roll

The most significant area that we need to 'get right' in order for the continued successful growth of the school (both for entitlement and enhancement) is strengthening the leadership team. In recent years, staff have moved on and new staff have joined. For this reason, we need the right people in the right roles, capable of providing strong leadership and guidance to an ever-changing and growing staff. A key element of strengthening the leadership team is ensuring sufficient capacity to cope with the changes ahead. It is for this reason, current leadership structures need to be reviewed. As part of this review, the decision has been taken to have a non-teaching Deputy Head. This will increase capacity to allow key actions to be undertaken. The next phase of the review is to plan ahead for unavoidable changes (the retirement of the Assistant Head for Key Stage 2), along with changes which will better support the expansion (separating out the role of SENCO from Head Teacher/Assistant Head for Key Stage 1). The role of middle leaders also needs to be developed in order to ensure the effective leadership of curriculum areas.

It has been inevitable that the expansion has created extra workload for the leadership team, but rather than this taking the focus away from teaching and learning, it has further 'sharpened' this focus to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning remains high and is consistent across the whole school. The influx of new staff means that the need for consistency is even greater.

School Priority 2: Continue to improve teaching, learning and achievement:

Our standards remain high because we do not 'take our eye off the ball' in terms of curriculum, teaching, learning, achievement and assessment. We do not take for granted that what has worked in the past will continue to work in the future. For this reason, some things that we have traditionally done well appear in our SDP e.g. reading provision, teaching and attainment including phonics. Although reading data is good, expectations in reading have changed against the back

drop of children's changing needs. It is therefore important that we prioritise a review of what is going well, what we need to do differently, including the way we work with parents to help them understand how they can support their children in both English and maths. Reading and being able to be confident in maths are essential life skills, which open the doors of opportunity to our children long after they have left St. Louis, so it is important that high quality teaching of reading and maths is a priority for us.

Whilst behaviour remains outstanding, we have noticed some trends which we are addressing. Some groups of children have less developed social, emotional and communication skills. This combined with a lack of self-awareness means that they are not equipped to deal with emotions and relationships, which can lead to incidents of unacceptable behaviour at times. Where there are several children who experience these difficulties in one class, this can have an impact on their learning along with that of others. We are addressing this through our review of the curriculum to ensure a focus on teaching children to develop a greater self-awareness and an awareness of others. Our curriculum review includes a focus on equality and challenging stereotypes. It also includes a focus on safe behaviours along with developing the skills needed to be a successful learner, including 'growth mindset'. We will be working with organisations which specialise in these areas so we can be confident that our curriculum is robust and prepares our pupils for life, enabling them to be informed, healthy, balanced and successful citizens of the future.

School Priority 3: Further refine and embed system for assessment without levels

We have worked successfully on developing our system for 'assessment without levels'. Our focus has been on ensuring that high levels of achievement and progress are maintained, that the system can be used effectively by teachers to deliver well planned lessons, is understood by the parents and can be used by the leadership of the school (including governors) to make informed decisions that will ensure the continued success of the school. We acknowledge the success that we have had so far but we now focus on the issues that have been raised (particularly in measuring the progress of our SEN children) therefore our priority for the coming 18 months is to focus on refining our assessment arrangements to make them less cumbersome and easier to understand.

School Priority 4: Continue to improve provision, teaching and learning in EYFS

EYFS will always be a priority as it is the foundation of our school and provides the foundation to good learning. It is important that despite budget cuts and other challenges we are able to deliver outstanding provision for our families, including an improved outside area. This is particularly important as some of the children joining our school do not have the skills they need to get off to a good start. Their difficulties or delays in speaking and in social skills make this all the more important. Our new Nursery will be opening this year and it is important that it grows into a successful and exciting environment for our children to flourish in as they begin their education.

All of the above priorities focus mainly on the 'entitlement' aspects of our school. With regard to 'enhancement' we want to focus on:

- Every child having the opportunity to have high quality drama, performance and singing lessons with more opportunities for every child to perform in some way, shape or form
- Finding more or better opportunities for our children to explore the outdoors through visits to forest schools and Wendover Woods, a shorter residential visit for younger children and more visits from the mobile farm

- Strengthening our links with France and the French language recognising our heritage as a St Louis School
- Developing our leadership opportunities for children even further including our Agents for Change
- Supporting our children emotionally through the School Counsellor and such programmes as 'Helping Hands'. Included in this is supporting individual children with one to one mentoring through times of particular difficulty

How will we know if we have implemented the new plan successfully?

- ✓ Targets (as written in the action plans) will be achieved. If they are not achieved there will be good reasons for this which will have been shared and explained e.g. with Governors
- ✓ Quality of teaching and learning in the specific curriculum areas will never be less than good (as verified by external reviewers) but our aim is for outstanding teaching and learning or teaching and learning that brings about outstanding achievement (however this is measured)
- ✓ Achievement for all groups of children will be at least consistently good/better than expected (however this is measured) and there will be no 'in school gaps'
- ✓ Our current high levels of attendance and behaviour are maintained because children are excited and enthusiastic about coming to school

These priorities and the actions we will take to achieve them are contained in the full version of the new School Development Plan (Jan 2018- 2019)