

St. James the Great Roman Catholic Primary and Nursery School



Curriculum Policy

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Introduction

The curriculum comprises all the planned activities that we organise in order to promote learning, personal growth and development. It includes not only the formal requirements of the National Curriculum, but also the range of extra-curricular activities that the school organises in order to enrich the experience of the children (a list of the current extra-curricular activities is available from the School Office).

The curriculum also includes the ‘hidden curriculum’, or what the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave.

From St. James the Great Mission Statement:

Taking account of the National Curriculum requirements, the school will provide a framework within which all pupils are enabled to develop the highest possible level of achievement, fulfilling their academic, moral, physical and spiritual potential.

The school will foster a respect for self and others in a climate of tolerance of individual differences, whilst recognising the importance of striving for excellence and enhancing children's transition to responsible adulthood.

Values

The curriculum is the means by which the school achieves its objective of educating children in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. Our school curriculum is underpinned by the following values:

- We value the way in which all children are unique, and our curriculum promotes respect for the views of each individual child, as well as for people of all cultures.
- We value the spiritual and moral development of each person, as well as their intellectual and physical growth.
- We value the importance of each person in our community. We organise our curriculum so that we promote co-operation and understanding between all members of our multi-cultural community.
- We value the rights enjoyed by each person in our society. We respect each child in our school for who they are, and we treat them with fairness and honesty. We aim to enable each person to be successful, and we provide equal opportunities for all the children in our school.
- We value our environment, and we aim, through our curriculum, to teach respect for our world, and how we should care for it for future generations, as well as our own.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of our school curriculum are:

- To make prayer, worship and liturgy real educational experiences, contributing to the development of the faith of everyone in the school.
- To create links between home, parish and school which prepare children for their future life.
- To help children to develop positive relationships through example, and to understand right from wrong.
- To provide a Catholic setting in which children can grow in understanding and acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.
- To enable all children to learn and develop their skills to the best of their ability.
- To promote a positive attitude towards learning, so that children enjoy coming to school, and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning.
- To teach children the basic skills of English and Mathematics.
- To enable children to be creative and to develop their own thinking.
- To teach children about their developing world, including how their environment and society have changed over time.
- To help children understand Britain's cultural heritage.
- To appreciate and value the contribution made by all ethnic groups in our multi-cultural society.
- To fulfil all the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.
- To help children understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all.
- To enable children to have respect for themselves and high self-esteem, and to be able to live and work co-operatively with others.

Implementation

The school follows the National Curriculum for both Key Stages One and Two, and in the Foundation Stage, the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

The curriculum includes:

- Mathematics (number and place value, addition and subtraction, multiplication and division, fractions, measurement, geometry and statistics).
- English (spoken language, reading and writing)
- Phonics (the teaching of the relationship between letters and sounds for reading and writing)
- Religious Education (the school follows the scheme 'The Way, the Truth and the Life')
- Science
- Computing

- History
- Geography
- Art
- Music
- Physical Education (including swimming and ice skating)
- Design and Technology
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education
- Modern Foreign Languages (or Ancient Languages)

For further information, please refer to the separate policies for these subject areas.

We also teach children about modern British values such as the democratic law and the right for fairness and a right to vote, personal liberty and the rule of law and how to respect and tolerate other faiths and beliefs.

At St James the Great, we implement these statutory requirements through a mixture of a thematic and subject based approach. The school makes use of the Learning Challenge resources. The Learning Challenge concept is built around the principle of greater learner involvement in their work. It requires deep thinking and encourages learners to work using a prime learning challenge (expressed as a question) as the starting point. From this a number of subsidiary learning challenges are planned, also expressed as questions. The key drivers of these challenges are Science, History and Geography. Essential skills (non-negotiables) in Reading, Writing and Mathematics are interwoven throughout.

There are many opportunities for children to have a voice in committees such as the School Council and Eco-Council.

Organisation and Planning

We plan our curriculum in three phases. We agree a long-term plan (or topic cycle) for each year group. This indicates what topics are to be taught in each term, and to which groups of children. We review our long-term plan on an annual basis and this ‘Whole School Topic Cycle’ is located on the school server and school website.

With our medium-term plans, we give clear guidance on the objectives and teaching strategies that we use when teaching each topic, highlighting the cross-curricular links. Our short-term plans are those that teachers write on a weekly basis. We use these to set out the learning objectives for each English or Mathematics session and to identify what resources and activities we are going to use in the lesson.

Some of the foundation subjects may be taught in half-termly blocks. For example, a child may concentrate on a History topic in one half-term, then switch to a greater emphasis on Geography during the following half-term. Over the three terms of the academic year, each child has the opportunity to experience the full range of National Curriculum subjects.

Inclusion

The curriculum in our school is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend the school. If we think it necessary to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of individual children, then we do so only after the parents of the child have been consulted.

If a child has a special need, our school does all it can to meet these individual needs. We comply with the requirements set out in the SEN Code of Practice in providing for children with special needs. If a child displays signs of having special needs, his/her teacher makes an assessment of this need. In most instances the teacher is able to provide resources and educational opportunities which meet the child's needs within the normal class organisation. If a child's need is more severe, we will liaise with the school's Inclusion Manager and, if deemed necessary, provide support through the use of Personal Support Assistants (PSAs).

The school provides an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for each of the children who are on the special needs register. This sets out the nature of the special need, and outlines how the schools will aim to address the need. It also sets out targets for improvement, so that we can review and monitor the progress of each child at regular intervals.

The Foundation Stage

The curriculum that we teach in the Nursery and Reception classes meets the requirements set out in the EYFS Framework. Our curriculum planning focuses on seven areas of learning and development:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

Our school fully supports the principle that young children learn through play, and by engaging in well-planned structured activities.

Teaching in the reception class builds on the experiences of the children in the Nursery. During the children's first term in the reception class, their teacher begins to record the skills of each child on entry to the main school. This assessment forms an important part of the future curriculum planning for each child. The Foundation Stage Profile is used to assess children's progress during the year.

We are well aware that all children need the support of parents and teachers to make good progress in school. We strive to build positive links with the parents of each child by keeping them informed about the way in which the children are being taught and how well each child is progressing.

The Role of Whole School Curriculum Leader

The role of the Whole School Curriculum Leader is to:

- Oversee Subject Leaders in the maintenance of subject SEFs, Curriculum Development Plans and subject policies.
- Provide Subject Leaders with advice and support to enable them to carry out the leadership of their subject effectively.
- Liaise with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Governors Curriculum Committee regarding curriculum developments.
- Secure an overview of curriculum provision in order to maintain breadth, balance and progression across the key stages.

The Role of the Subject Leader

The role of the Subject Leader is to:

- Provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject.
- Support and offer advice to colleagues on issues related to the subject.
- Monitor pupil progress in that subject area.
- Provide efficient resource management for the subject.

It is the role of each Subject Leader to keep up to date with developments in their subject, at both national and local level. They review the way the subject is taught in the school and plan for improvement. Each Subject Leader reviews the curriculum plans for their subject, ensures that there is full coverage of the National Curriculum and that progression is planned into schemes of work. The Subject Leader may also keep a portfolio of children's work, which s/he uses to show the achievements of children at each key stage and to give examples of expectations of attainment.

Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body's Curriculum Committee is responsible for monitoring the way the school curriculum is implemented. This Committee reviews each subject area according to the policy review timetable.

We have appointed Link Governors for all areas of the curriculum. The Governors liaise with the Subject Leaders of these areas, and monitor closely the way the school teaches these subjects.

Subject Leaders monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school. They examine long-term and medium-term planning, undertake book scrutiny and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used.

Each Subject Leader is responsible for updating their individual subject policy.

Linked Policies

- Teaching and Learning
- Early Years Foundation Stage
- Homework
- Assessment
- Educational Visits
- Marking and Feedback
- Special Educational Needs
- Governor Visits

Next Policy Review Date: Autumn 2015