



Curriculum Policy

Introduction

The curriculum is all the planned activities that we organise in order to promote learning and 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. It also includes the 'hidden curriculum', or what the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. We aim to teach children how to grow into positive, responsible people, who can work and co-operate with others while developing knowledge and skills, so that they achieve their true potential.

Subjects are taught in line with the Christian ethos of St. George's. With regard to curriculum areas the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) grid defines how each subject supports, and aims to develop, our Christian ethos. Further information may be found in the school's SMSC Policy.

Values

St George's school curriculum is underpinned by the values that are central to our school's Mission Statement. The curriculum is the means by which the school achieves its objective of educating children in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to develop and lead fulfilling lives in modern Britain.

Our school follows the recommendations of 'The National Curriculum in England'. The following values permeates our curriculum:

- 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, moral, social and cultural development of each person, as well as their intellectual and physical growth.
- We value the development of each child's preparation for life in modern Britain.
- 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 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 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 literacy, numeracy and computing;
- 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 enable children to be positive citizens in society;
- to fulfil all the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Durham and Newcastle Diocese Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education;
- to teach children to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to understand right from wrong;
- 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.

Aims of the National Curriculum

The national curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to range beyond the national curriculum specifications. The national curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum.

Early Years Foundation Stage (Curriculum for 3 to 5 year olds)

At St George's Church of England Academy we strongly believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life to fulfil their potential. A child's experiences in the early years have a major impact on their future life chances. We recognise every individual child as unique with amazing potential. We appreciate their richness, their talents, their understandings and views of the world, their feelings about themselves and other children around them as well as adults who engage with them. We see all our children as competent, active learners who have the power to amaze us. We very much enjoy working in partnership with families to support all our children's development and learning in the early years of their life.



Our Early Years curriculum is based on the Areas of Learning which leads to the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage. These areas of learning are:-

Prime Areas of Learning

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development

Specific Areas of Learning

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Understanding of the World

Each child enters nursery at an individual stage of development with differing experiences, interests and needs. Our curriculum is organised to take into account the differing development needs of each child and is centred around purposeful play. For young children play is a vehicle by which they gain access to the curriculum. Play is the way of learning. In the minds of young children there is no division between play and work for whatever they are doing they are learning.

“Through play, children practice and consolidate learning, play with ideas and develop what they know. In their play children also dare to take risks, negotiate, solve problems, initiate, anticipate, re-arrange, restate, reflect, integrate and consolidate their knowledge and understanding”.

Early Years Curriculum Group 1989.

We are aware of the requirements of the National Curriculum and ensure that each child is given appropriate experiences to equip them for the next stage of learning.

Organisation and planning in Key Stages 1 and 2

The subjects covered in the National Curriculum are; English, Mathematics, Science, Computing, History, Geography, Music, Design and Technology, Art and Design, Citizenship, Languages and Physical Education. As already stated, we follow the Durham and Newcastle Diocese Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

We plan our curriculum in three phases. We agree a long-term plan for each key stage. This indicates what topics are to be taught in each year over a two year rolling programme. Teachers have the flexibility to define their own topics which ensure coverage of required objectives whilst maintaining the creativity linked to children's interests. Please refer to our Curriculum Overview (at the end of this policy) which clearly indicates the areas covered within each of our phases.

With our medium-term plans, we give clear guidance on the objectives and teaching strategies that we use when teaching each topic. We use the National Curriculum for our medium-term planning.

Our short-term plans are those that our teachers write on a weekly or daily basis. We use these to set out the learning objectives for each session, and to identify what resources and activities we are going to use in the lesson.

We adopt an inter-disciplinary topic approach to curriculum planning. We plan the curriculum carefully, so that there is coherence and full coverage of all aspects of the National Curriculum and early learning goals, and there is planned progression in all curriculum areas.



'Secrets of Success'

In our school, our 'Secrets of Success' are embedded in all areas of the curriculum. These are:

- Work Hard
- Concentrate
- Try New Things
- Imagine
- Improve
- Understand Others
- Push Yourself
- Don't Give Up

Personal, Health, Social and Emotional Education

Our school promotes the highest standards of personal health, social and emotional education, enabling the child to make decisions concerning their behaviour, attitudes and actions in life.

We wish to encourage:

- A tolerance of other faiths and communities
- A respect of all human life, regardless of age and ability
- Flexibility that reflects the school as a community
- An awareness of the implications and commitment to ultimate citizenship.

Health and Sex and Relationships Education

By the time children leave our school, they will have knowledge and understanding of the basic principles of health, hygiene and safety. Children are taught how the body works and how to take care of it.

In the light of current evidence that young peoples' drug misuse is increasing, the school believes that it has a duty to inform and educate young people of the consequences of drug use and misuse. The school takes a proactive stance on this matter and treats health education as a vital part of the personal and social education of every pupil. The local community police and the school nurse assist in this area.

The aspect of Sex Education in the curriculum is not treated out of context, but as an integral part of the general study of living things. The year 6 programme deals with reproduction in a sensitive and caring manner. If parents are worried about any aspect of this topic, they may come into school to discuss the matter further.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex education offered.

Extra Curricular Activities

Many children like to participate in activities outside the school day and we offer a range of clubs, mainly for the Key Stage 2 children at different times of the year. These may include Football, Computing, Art, History, Environmental work, French etc.

Some clubs are organised for lunchtimes to allow our younger children the opportunity to become involved.

Some after school clubs are organised by outside agencies and parents may be required to pay for these if their child chooses to attend. Clubs on offer may include football, Multi-sports and dance.



Children with Special Educational Needs

In our school we make regular assessments of progress for all children. We seek to identify children making less than expected progress, given their age and individual circumstances. The first response to such progress is high quality teaching targeted at their areas of weakness, through intervention and booster groups delivered by teaching staff and highly trained teaching assistants. Where progress continues to be less than expected, the class teacher and SENCo assess whether the child has a SEN. When a child needs educational provision that is additional to or different to the high quality teaching, we ensure that we use our best endeavours to ensure that such provision is made for those who need it.

In our school, teaching is personalised through rigorous tracking and target setting systems and we are proud of our close relationships with parents and outside agencies, which enables our school to promote positive outcomes for our children.

Gifted and Talented Children

A gifted and talented child is one who demonstrates a significantly higher level of ability than most other children in his/her age group, at a particular point in time. A gifted child demonstrates these abilities in linguistic, mathematical and/or logical/scientific areas of the curriculum. A talented child demonstrates these abilities in art, dance, drama, music and sport.

At St George's we work closely as a team to set stretching targets and regularly monitor progress through our tracking system and progress meetings. When a child is highlighted as being gifted and talented, they are given opportunities to explore and continue to be successful. In our school, praise is consistently used by all members of staff and children are awarded for their successes in various ways including our weekly Praise Assembly.

The role of the subject team

Each subject is led by a subject team. The role of the subject team 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.

The school gives subject teams some time throughout the year, so that they can carry out the necessary duties involved with their role. It is the role of each subject team 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. This development planning links to whole-school objectives. Each subject team reviews the curriculum plans for their subject, ensures that there is full coverage of the National Curriculum. Progression is planned into schemes of work and these have been developed by the SLT, in line with the new National Curriculum requirements.



Assessment

In order to ensure that our children maximise their achievement whilst they are with us a variety of assessments are carried out starting with Baseline Assessment soon after a child starts school and ending with the National Curriculum Assessments in Year 6. In between we use a variety of published tests and teacher assessment to ensure that the work the children receive is matched to their abilities and needs.

The data from these assessments is used to produce a variety of targets which are designed to raise achievement; both the individual child's and that of the school. We have found that setting targets for children is a powerful motivator to learning.

Monitoring and review

Our governing body's Standards and Performance Committee is responsible for monitoring the way the school curriculum is implemented.

We have named governors for all curriculum areas. The governors liaise with the subject leaders / teams to gain a greater understanding of these areas.

The head teacher is responsible for the day to day organisation of the curriculum. The Senior Management team monitors all areas of teaching and learning across the school.



Curriculum Overview - English

In English, we develop the spoken language, reading, spelling and vocabulary, handwriting and writing skills in a variety of ways which cater for the individual needs of all children and ensure that they all receive a good grounding in these basic skills. The Literacy programme involves using a variety of teaching methods and resources to make the learning experience both stimulating and fun for the children.

Our overarching aim for English is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

During the course of a normal week, children will undertake some aspect of language work every day and will experience working individually, in a small group or as a whole class, whichever is appropriate for that activity.

Teachers will develop pupils' spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.

Spoken language

The curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others and teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils are also taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

All pupils are enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

Reading

The programmes of study for reading at Key Stages 1 and 2 consist of two dimensions:

- word reading
- comprehension (both listening and reading).

It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each.

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics is emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) when they start school.

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. All pupils must be encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure-house of wonder and joy for curious young minds. It is essential that, by the end of their primary education, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject in their forthcoming secondary education.

Writing

The programmes of study for writing at Key Stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these two dimensions. In addition, pupils are taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. These aspects of writing have been incorporated into the programmes of study for composition.

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Effective composition involves forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and eventually, speedy handwriting.

Spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. They also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning.

Pupils are taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English.

Throughout the programmes of study, teachers teach pupils the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language. It is important that pupils learn the correct grammatical terms in English and that these terms are integrated within teaching.



Curriculum Overview - Mathematics

Our scheme is based on the Numeracy National Curriculum and is planned to ensure that children learn the skills appropriate to their needs, aptitude and ability. This is achieved through a balanced programme of differentiated activities which enable children to deal with mathematical concepts confidently and effectively at their own level.

The curriculum for mathematics aims to ensure that all pupils:

- become fluent in the fundamentals of mathematics, including through varied and frequent practice with increasingly complex problems over time, so that pupils develop conceptual understanding and the ability to recall and apply knowledge rapidly and accurately.
- reason mathematically by following a line of enquiry, conjecturing relationships and generalisations, and developing an argument, justification or proof using mathematical language
- can solve problems by applying their mathematics to a variety of routine and non-routine problems with increasing sophistication, including breaking down problems into a series of simpler steps and persevering in seeking solutions.

Mathematics is an interconnected subject in which pupils need to be able to move fluently between representations of mathematical ideas. The programmes of study are, by necessity, organised into apparently distinct domains, but pupils should make rich connections across mathematical ideas to develop fluency, mathematical reasoning and competence in solving increasingly sophisticated problems. They should also apply their mathematical knowledge to science and other subjects.

Key Stage 1 – Years 1 and 2

The principal focus of mathematics teaching in Key Stage 1 is to ensure that pupils develop confidence and mental fluency with whole numbers, counting and place value. This involves working with numerals, words and the four operations, including with practical resources (for example, concrete objects and measuring tools).

At this stage, pupils should develop their ability to recognise, describe, draw, compare and sort different shapes and use the related vocabulary. Teaching should also involve using a range of measures to describe and compare different quantities such as length, mass, capacity/volume, time and money. By the end of Year 2, pupils should know the number bonds to 20 and be precise in using and understanding place value. An emphasis on practice at this early stage will aid fluency.

Pupils should read and spell mathematical vocabulary, at a level consistent with their increasing word reading and spelling knowledge at Key Stage 1.

Lower Key Stage 2 – Years 3 and 4

The principal focus of mathematics teaching in Lower Key Stage 2 is to ensure that pupils become increasingly fluent with whole numbers and the four operations, including number facts and the concept of place value. This should ensure that pupils develop efficient written and mental methods and perform calculations accurately with increasingly large whole numbers.

At this stage, pupils should develop their ability to solve a range of problems, including with simple fractions and decimal place value. Teaching should also ensure that pupils draw with increasing accuracy and develop mathematical reasoning so they can analyse shapes and their properties, and confidently describe the relationships between them. It should ensure that they can use measuring instruments with accuracy and make connections between measure and number.



By the end of year 4, pupils should have memorised their multiplication tables up to and including the 12 multiplication table and show precision and fluency in their work.

Pupils should read and spell mathematical vocabulary correctly and confidently, using their growing word reading knowledge and their knowledge of spelling.

Upper Key Stage 2 – Years 5 and 6

The principal focus of mathematics teaching in Upper Key Stage 2 is to ensure that pupils extend their understanding of the number system and place value to include larger integers. This should develop the connections that pupils make between multiplication and division with fractions, decimals, percentages and ratio.

At this stage, pupils should develop their ability to solve a wider range of problems, including increasingly complex properties of numbers and arithmetic, and problems demanding efficient written and mental methods of calculation. With this foundation in arithmetic, pupils are introduced to the language of algebra as a means for solving a variety of problems. Teaching in geometry and measures should consolidate and extend knowledge developed in number. Teaching should also ensure that pupils classify shapes with increasingly complex geometric properties and that they learn the vocabulary they need to describe them.

By the end of year 6, pupils should be fluent in written methods for all four operations, including long multiplication and division, and in working with fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils should read, spell and pronounce mathematical vocabulary correctly.

Please refer to Year Group Long Term Overviews for further information on other subjects.

NB The overviews are currently under review

