

Curriculum Policy



St. Mary's
Catholic Primary
School

Approved by: [Name]

Date: [Date]

Last reviewed on: [Date]

Next review due by: [Date]

Our Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum is built upon our 4 core values

- Faith
- Challenge
- Pride
- Success

This is underpinned by a strong emphasis on SMSC and has Christ at the Centre.

The vision for the curriculum at St Mary's is that pupils develop as well-rounded individuals with a strong sense of self and a commitment to being an involved participant in a community. They view themselves as unique individuals with value and worth created in the likeness and image of God. Our curriculum is ambitious and gives our pupils the experiences, knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life including future learning and employment.

Balance

At St Mary's we carefully design, plan and implement a curriculum to provide balance for every pupil. It is our underlying belief that every child should feel valued and experience the feeling of success in a wide range of curriculum areas. We believe that through the curriculum we can impact how they feel about themselves, so that they feel confident and ready to tackle any challenge they may face. We have designed, organised and planned our curriculum to ensure every child receives an appropriate mix of academic and personal development which means that in practice our curriculum places equal importance on core and foundation subjects.

At St Mary's we place high priority on ensuring children's physical and mental wellbeing are met. We understand that children will not be successful learners unless they are emotionally secure, therefore we carefully design our curriculum and adopt a flexible approach to timetabling to ensure that we can meet and respond to any issues which may arise. Children's physical and mental wellbeing are as valued and important as academic development.

Our well planned and thoughtful approach to SMSC helps to ensure that every child is well cared for and supported.

Our balanced approach to the curriculum is not at the expense of high standards in core subject areas. High standards and enabling children to reach national expectations and above is of vital importance if they are to succeed at the next stage of their education and go on to achieve full and happy lives and careers.

Breadth

At St Mary's we carefully design, plan and implement a curriculum which provides breadth for every pupil. Careful analysis and discussion about our pupils' backgrounds, life experiences and culture has helped us to design a curriculum with four key values underpinning every subject area. We believe that by focusing on the following key values our children will be ready to successfully meet the challenges of the next stage of their education and their lives.

Our values are:

1. Faith – Within this, we will focus on diversity, tolerance, respect, spirituality and forgiveness
2. Challenge – Within this, we will focus on perseverance, resilience, initiative, intellectual stimulation, independence, problem solving and enquiry
3. Pride – Within this, we will focus on community, participation, celebration, environment, self-esteem and self-worth
4. Success – Within this, we will focus on high expectations, inclusion, collaboration and aspirations.

We have designed and planned our curriculum to offer a range of experiences which contribute to every child receiving a full and rich curriculum. The range of experiences we offer ensures that our children benefit from a full range of academic, spiritual, moral, social and cultural activities. These activities enrich their lives and those of our whole school community and make them proud of their British values and diverse society to which belong and play an active part. We are proud that our curriculum gives our children the skills, confidence and self-belief to lead a happy and fulfilled life by encouraging them to aim high and work towards their goals and dreams in life.

Depth

Our curriculum at St Mary's is carefully designed, organised and planned for depth of learning. Our definition of progress is; knowing more and doing more. We design, organise and plan our curriculum to ensure that children are not merely covering content but achieving a depth to their learning which enables them to use their skills and understanding in all areas of the curriculum.

Our careful curriculum design and planning means that we build in many opportunities for repetition and practise opportunities for essential knowledge, skills and understanding in every subject. This ensures that children are able to revisit previous learning, which allows them to gradually develop a deeper understanding of the skills and processes within subjects, at their own pace and in the best possible way for each individual child.

Our curriculum is meticulously designed and planned to move the nature of children's thinking to a higher order deep level of understanding rather than just acquiring new facts and knowledge. We want our children to have the opportunity to produce incredible work. For this to happen, we need to do less, but do it better.

Implementation

Curriculum documents are a framework – a starting point rather than a set of instructions to be slavishly followed. When planning each topic/area we start by looking at the standard we expect every child to achieve and what deep level learning looks like. We plan for the development of generic skills that can be implemented in all subject areas. These are:

Basic Skills – speak clearly and convey ideas confidently, read and communicate ideas in writing effectively and efficiently, use new technologies confidently and purposefully

Active Learning – seek out and enjoy challenges, collaborate with others, show commitment and perseverance, assess themselves and others

Creative Thinking – ask questions to extend thinking, generate ideas and explore possibilities, overcome barriers by trying alternatives and adapting or developing ideas, connect ideas or experiences in inventive ways

Each subject has specific skills and concepts relevant to that subject. Learning experiences are then planned and sequenced to ensure that every child stands the best possible chance of achieving the expected standard, deep level learning and the secure development of skills.

We use Covey's 'Habits of Effective People' to Begin with the End in Mind. This means to begin each project with a clear vision of our desired direction and destination. We aim to make the end purposeful, engaging and relevant. The outcome is authentic and exposes children to critical audiences. A range of concepts are explored within each topic to help us see things from a wider perspective, develop connections that extend the topic and develop personal and thinking skills.

We have a rigorous approach to the teaching of reading which develops pupils' confidence and enjoyment in reading. At the early stages of learning to read, reading materials are closely matched to pupils' phonic knowledge. As pupils progress their reading skills, novels are chosen to maximise engagement and enjoyment of reading whilst being academically challenging.

Flexibility of timetables allows teachers to explore subjects in depth allowing the children to steer their learning and develop a deep level of understanding.

Our curriculum CPD ensures that everybody understands that we are not merely covering content and filling children with knowledge, but developing key skills, knowledge and understanding which can be applied across the curriculum. Subject specific skills progression, Blooms Taxonomy verbs and Chris Quigley Milestones are used to ensure progression.

Many opportunities are provided for parents to become actively engaged in the curriculum establishing a genuine learning partnership between home and school.

Impact

We understand that learning happens over time rather than in a single lesson. As a result of our carefully designed and planned curriculum, pupils' develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well. This is reflected in results from national tests. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of education and they leave with aspirations. They are confident, articulate learners who have resilience and a drive for improvement. Pupils read widely and often for pleasure. Due to a rigorous focus on our core values and SMSC, pupils have a strong sense of self and feel a valued part of a community. They care about others and the world they live in and take action to pursue social justice in line with Catholic Social Teaching.