

Our Teaching and Learning Policy

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Subject Leaders

At St. Mary's we have subject leaders who oversee, develop, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their subject across the school. These leaders are encouraged to keep up-to-date on issues that affect their subject and they attend regular training and network meetings to ensure that they have appropriate knowledge and expertise. These leaders provide ongoing professional development for all staff and they ensure that teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Curriculum resources are audited every year to ensure that they serve the school's curricular intentions and enable effective curriculum implementation.

Curriculum Overviews

Please see our Curriculum Overviews for a summary of the main topics covered in each year group. We recognise that children's learning is enhanced by different experiences and have planned visits and visitors, every term, linking to our different curriculum areas (see our Visits and Visitors overview).

Medium-term Planning

Religious Education (RE)

Pupils develop a knowledge and understanding of key topics whilst reflecting on meaning and activities are planned to support spiritual and moral development. Our planning meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory - guidance for the RE classroom curriculum in Catholic schools.

English

English and Reading are at the heart of our curriculum. High-quality texts (from classic to current authors) provide the driver for units of work (see Curriculum Overviews) and they have been selected to ensure that pupils experience a wide and rich Reading curriculum to promote a life-long love of reading. Identified texts link with our science, geography and history topics to help develop curriculum links. Teachers use the Focus English guide to support them in breaking down the English curriculum so that they can plan for units of work in a manageable way. For each year group, every objective – Reading, writing and grammar - is broken down into steps which indicate the knowledge and understanding required to master the end of year learning with many opportunities to re-visit, practise and apply learning. These ensure that learning is pitched appropriately and that progress is evident from unit to unit of work towards secure and deep learning by the end of the year. Ongoing formative assessment is used to inform future planning and lessons are adapted according to the children's needs.

Reading

There is a sharp focus on Reading and the units offer questions and activities which are used in whole class lessons. At the beginning of each unit, teachers concentrate on understanding, responding to and deepening an understanding of the text. This focus continues with on-going reading activities matched to the identified reading objectives.

Grammar and Vocabulary

Grammar and vocabulary work is taught purposefully, in context, so that it can be used in the identified outcomes. Activities are used to revisit and consolidate learning as necessary.

Writing

Along with a focus on grammar and vocabulary development to ensure effective and accurate writing, the high-quality texts provide models and scaffolds so that children are enabled to make independent choices about how they write and the effect they wish to create. Pupils are given time to write, evaluate, redraft and proof-read their extended pieces of writing using given prompts appropriate to their needs. This is often done alongside teacher and peer support.

Phonics

All pupils, in Early Years and Key Stage 1, are taught phonics and how to blend sounds using the Department for Education's 'Letters and Sounds' document. We also use resources from the Story Time Phonics programme to help teach phonics through the use of real books. If needed, we deliver a Phonics Catch-Up Group for pupils in Year 2 who may not have met the government's Phonics Screening Check expected standard.

Once pupils can blend sounds and they are able to read simple words, they are given a book to bring home from the Oxford Reading Tree scheme. Their progress, across this scheme, is assessed by teachers weekly. All pupils, from Year 2 upwards, also have the opportunity to choose an appropriate book from our school Library Bus to help develop an interest in reading and a love of books.

Mathematics

Our mathematics curriculum is challenging for all pupils and aligned with end of year curricular expectations. Teachers use the Focus Maths guide to support them in breaking down the mathematics curriculum so that they can plan for units of work in a manageable way. Topics are revisited throughout the year (see Curriculum Overviews) to help develop mastery of knowledge. Teachers flexibly revisit and extend teaching blocks as required. Planning is based on the end of year expectation for different topics highlighting the learning steps that are needed to attain this expectation. Pupils are asked to complete a pre-learning task at the start of each unit of work. These (together with previous ongoing assessments) have been used to help assess whether children are in a place to access learning aligned with the end of year expectations. Pupils, who need it, are given the chance to practise and consolidate learning objectives. Children at this stage of learning will usually be supported by the teacher and guided through the mathematics content in a scaffolded way. There are opportunities for mental and oral rehearsal alongside concrete (pencil and paper) activities. Pupils who have attained learning objectives are given tasks to deepen their understanding, giving particular attention to reasoning and thinking. Activities are planned for pupils working at greater depth to work at a 'deeper' level. These are designed to deepen understanding of the end of year expectation rather than move pupils on to learning from subsequent years.

Science

Teachers use Rising Stars resources to support them in breaking down the science curriculum so that they can plan for units of work in a manageable way. The units ensure that there is a large focus on working scientifically (with a clear progression of skills) as well as dealing with the specific science knowledge for a particular age group. Natural links have been identified with English and high quality texts are used to support different topics. For example, in Year 4 'The Incredible Book-Eating Boy' is central to the science unit dealing with the digestive system. Similarly, pupils are given opportunities to improve their writing (including a use of vocabulary) in science whilst holding onto the statutory requirements for science teaching.

Computing

The core of our computing curriculum is computer science, in which pupils are taught the principles of information and computation, how digital systems work, and how to put this knowledge to use through programming. Our Purple Mash scheme of work builds on this knowledge equipping pupils to use information technology to create programs, systems and a range of content (see Curriculum Overview for coverage). Pupils are timetabled for one Computing lesson in our computer suite each week as well as an additional lesson for developing their information and communication skills across all areas of the curriculum. Activities are planned to ensure that pupils become digitally literate – able to use, and express themselves and develop their ideas through, information and communication technology. As well as the computer room, the children also have access to computers in every classroom and a class set of iPads. In addition to our annual E-Safety Week, ongoing **online safety** is taught as a part of every topic, every half term.

History

Activities and experiences for Early Years pupils are planned according to the areas of learning and development, as outlined in the latest DfE EYFS Framework. All activities will adhere to the objectives set out in this framework. In particular, history-based activities will be used to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the 'Past and Present'.

In KS1 and KS2: History is taught as a discrete subject, although links are made with other subjects wherever possible. Each class covers three topics per year (see our topic overview). Each topic includes enquiry questions focusing on specific disciplinary knowledge and encouraging the children to think like historians. When planning, all teachers consider the needs of the pupils in their class, including those with SEND. Our plans reflect our local context, particularly in the case of the local history studies in Years 2, 3 and 6. Pupils' learning is enriched through visits, visitors, history walks and workshops inspiring pupils' curiosity to want to find out more about the past. There are also opportunities for flexibility in relation to pupils' interests and also in response to current events and anniversaries.

Geography

Early Years: Activities and experiences are based on the areas of learning and development, as outlined in the DfE's 'Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'. In particular, geography-based activities will be used to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the 'People Culture and Communities' and 'The Natural World.' Geography is taught as a discrete subject in KS1 and KS2, although links are made with other subjects where possible. Our school uses the Rising Stars Geography plans as a framework for breaking down the National Curriculum programmes of study into manageable chunks. All teachers adapt this planning according to the needs of the pupils in their class including those with SEND. Planning is also adapted to consider the local context, particularly in the case of fieldwork opportunities. Pupils learning is enriched through class visits/visitors, fieldwork and workshops inspiring pupils' curiosity and fascination about their world.

Art and Design

We aim to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills to experiment, invent and create their own works of art, craft and design.

Topics are taught using Kapow resources and we aim to ensure that all pupils:

- Produce creative work, exploring their ideas and recording their experiences
- Become proficient in drawing, painting, sculpture and other art, craft and design techniques
- Evaluate and analyse creative works using the language of art, craft and design

- Know about great artists, craft makers and designers, and understand the historical and cultural development of their art forms.

Design and Technology

Pupils are given the opportunity to design and make products that solve real-life problems within a variety of contexts. They acquire a broad range of subject knowledge drawing on other subjects including mathematics, science, computing and art. Pupils learn how to take risks and develop resilience through a range of problem solving. Through an evaluation of past and present design and technology, they develop a critical understanding of its impact on daily life and the wider world.

Physical Education (PE)

EYFS follows the programme real Foundations. Within this programme the children will be focusing on six skills within physical activity (personal, social, cognitive, creative, physical and Health & fitness). The lessons are taught thematically, which means they are based around a story that the children read in class and the activities reflect those that are found within the book.

Years 1 and 2 continue this thematic approach in which their PE lessons follow on from a book they are reading within class. They also focus on the same six elements that EYFS work on - these six areas are the same in each Key Stage to ensure continuity.

Years 3 to 6 focus on one particular skill each term: personal, social, cognitive, creative, physical and health and fitness. The skill is taught through a series of activities and games, none of which are traditional sports. The reason behind this is to ensure every child is able to engage in the activity, as often children who do not enjoy a particular sport will then not enjoy the six/seven weeks we focus on it.

We have been awarded the Youth Sport Trust Silver Quality Mark for our commitment to physical education (PE) and school sport. Pupils are actively encouraged to take part in a wide range of sports clubs including multi-sports, Rugby Tots, basketball, football, netball and gymnastics. Pupils engage in competitive sports and have the opportunity to represent our school at local, regional and national competitions. This includes opportunities for pupils with special educational needs to participate in inclusive competitions including the annual New Age Kurling, Boccia and Panathlon events.

We are delighted to announce that we have been awarded the School Games Gold Mark Award for our commitment to the development of competition across our school and into the community. Pupils are encouraged to lead healthy and active lives through PE lessons linking with work in PSHE. This is also promoted through our annual Health and Wellbeing Week and through initiatives such as 'the daily mile' and 'Walk to School weeks.'

Music

Our weekly music lessons are taught by our specialist music teacher (see topics in Curriculum Overviews). We aim to inspire pupils to develop a love of music and their talent as musicians.

Pupils are given the opportunity to:

- Perform, listen to, review and evaluate music across a range of historical periods, genres, styles and traditions, including the works of the great composers and musicians
- Learn to sing and to use their voices, to create and compose music on their own and with others, have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, use technology appropriately and have the opportunity to progress to the next level of musical excellence
- Understand and explore how music is created, produced and communicated, including through the inter-related dimensions: pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate musical notations.

As well as through their music lessons, pupils are taught to sing during our weekly Hymn Practice. The children have the opportunity to play a range of musical instruments including the guitar, piano and violin. We hold various musical events throughout the year including productions,

workshops, assemblies and an annual Carol Concert. We hold annual Music Performances giving pupils to opportunity to showcase the work they have been doing in their music lessons.

Foreign Languages (French)

Pupils from Years 3 to 6 are taught French by our specialist Foreign Languages teacher (see Curriculum Overviews for topics covered). Our curriculum aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Understand and respond to spoken and written language from a variety of authentic sources
- Speak with increasing confidence, fluency and spontaneity, finding ways of communicating what they want to say, including through discussion and asking questions, and continually improving the accuracy of their pronunciation and intonation
- Can write at varying length, for different purposes and audiences, using the variety of grammatical structures that they have learnt
- Discover and develop an appreciation of a range of writing in the language studied.

RSE and Health Education

Our RSE and Health curriculum aims to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes all pupils need in order to keep healthy and safe and to prepare them for life and work in modern Britain. It provides a framework through which such key skills, attributes and knowledge can be developed and applied to some of the issues facing children today. From mental health to understanding the importance of staying safe online, healthy and safe relationships, making sense of media messages, challenging extreme views and knowing how to live a healthy lifestyle. Links are made across the curriculum and important messages reinforced through our Internet Safety and Health/Wellbeing Weeks (these themed weeks include workshops, assemblies, cross-curricular activities etc.).

As a school, we follow the PSHE Jigsaw scheme. Designed as a whole-school approach, Jigsaw PSHE / Health and Well-being provides a detailed and comprehensive scheme of learning. Jigsaw is a unique, spiral, progressive and effective scheme of work, aiming to prepare children/young people for life, helping them really know and value who they are and understand how they relate to other people in this ever-changing world.

Short-term Weekly Planning

Teachers adapt their medium-term planning according to the needs of their class. Daily evaluations of lessons are used to inform future planning. This may include planning consolidation activities or challenges for pupils who have mastered key areas of learning.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusive Quality First Teaching

We promote equal opportunities throughout our practice, for all our pupils, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We aim to provide high-quality everyday personalised teaching that effectively includes all pupils. Clear learning objectives are shared with the children and returned to at the end of the lesson; new vocabulary is introduced and explained; we use lively, interactive teaching styles and make maximum use of visual and kinaesthetic as well as auditory/verbal learning. Targeted catch-up provision is used for groups of children to put them back on course. If this doesn't work for a particular pupil, they may need a deeper intervention offering a more personalised solution. Please see our Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and SEND policies for further details. At St. Mary's we have the same ambitions for almost all pupils but this may not always be practical for some pupils with a special need and/or disability. If this is the case, the child will follow a highly personalised, ambitious curriculum to meet their identified needs.

Ongoing Assessments

Teachers check pupils' understanding throughout lessons taught, identifying misconceptions and providing clear, direct feedback. Teachers respond and adapt their teaching as necessary. Pupils self-assess their progress, at the end of every lesson, based on a given success criteria (see our Marking and Target Setting Policy for further details).