

St Mary's Catholic Primary School



Curriculum Statement

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we believe that our curriculum should be challenging, exciting, enjoyable, and relevant. We strive to meet the needs of all children across the spectrum of abilities. We have started to develop a curriculum that promotes a more creative approach to learning and takes account of the distinctiveness of our school. It is based on the key concepts and principles of the Gospel:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven" **Faithfulness & Integrity**

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" **Dignity & Compassion**

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" **Humility & Gentleness**

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" **Truth & Justice**

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" **Forgiveness & Mercy**

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" **Purity & Holiness**

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God" **Empathy & Peace**

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of slander against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice for your reward is great in heaven; they persecuted the prophets before you in the very same way" **Service & Sacrifice**

These Gospel Values are lived out through our aims and vision statement.

VISION STATEMENT

Our school family at St Mary's wants this to be a safe, caring, creative and happy place, where we all have a fair chance to learn and grow together and to do the best we can. We do this by knowing and loving Jesus more every day and by following his teachings in a joyful way.

MISSION AND AIMS

To provide a safe, caring, happy community where each individual is given an equal opportunity to develop to their full potential in the light of Christ's teaching and to share in His mission.

We aim to achieve this vision via the quality of education we provide in partnership with the home and parish.

Here at St. Mary's, education is for the whole person.

We aim to:-

- a) assist the growth and development of the whole school by encouraging that growth and development in all its members;
- b) meet each member of the community on their faith journey and help them grow and develop in their relationship with God;
- c) provide a well-balanced and broad-based curriculum that fulfils the legal requirements placed on it and develops the spiritual, moral, social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs of the individual;
- d) create an outward looking working community united by our common aim. This includes the pupils, staff, parents, governors, clergy and wider community.

With Christ in our hearts we grow in love to help others.

Our curriculum is further informed by 'National Curriculum 2014', 'Excellence and Enjoyment', and the five outcomes of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda

- 1 - be healthy
- 2 - stay safe
- 3 - enjoy and achieve
- 4 - make a positive contribution
- 5 - achieve economic well-being

We also strive to underpin our whole learning experience with these 6 key drivers:

- 1. Spirituality-** *RE ; prayer; worship; catholicity, reflection; meditation; PSE; citizenship; relationships, the Common Good.*
- 2. Knowledge of the World-** *global understanding; news; community projects/community cohesion; science; geography; interdependence; fair trade*
- 3. Enquiry-DT;** *Maths; science; open ended tasks; higher order thinking; independent learning; resilience*
- 4. Emotional Awareness-** *relationships; respect; knowledge of yourself and others; learning skills of empathy, British Values.*
- 5. The Arts-** *culture; art; drama; history; writing stories; festivals; music; dance*
- 6. Enterprise-** *planning and working together towards a purpose or outcome. Linking this work with industry. (Enterprise Initiative support)*

As teachers we ask ourselves:

1. What do we want children to learn?
 - a. What have we got to teach (The national curriculum)?
 - b. What do we want to teach (anything else you think is important for your children)?

2. Why are we teaching it?
 - a. Which knowledge, concepts, skills and understanding will children learn?
 - b. At which national curriculum milestone will these skills be taught?

We want a curriculum that is a carefully planned, thematic approach to teaching and learning designed to support children's natural curiosity and stimulate their creativity. It will offer children the opportunity to work in depth, giving them the time they need to reflect, consolidate and transfer their learning.

Our approach to the curriculum is a skills based approach. The key concepts, principles and themes have been developed into more creative cross-curricular themes through which the children are helped to develop along a skills and attitudes continuum. The intention is to give children, teachers and teaching assistants more opportunity to explore their own creativity. We use the Chris Quigley 'Essentials Curriculum' to help us ensure we cover the skills and concepts necessary.

Direct experience is placed at the centre of the curriculum so that teachers draw out and develop children's thinking and capacities in meaningful contexts. Core knowledge and skills are at the heart of the learning process with the children exploring a wide range of topics. For the last 2 years 2013/14 and 2014/15 we have enriched our offer by including the Enterprise Initiative programme to further prepare children for life.

There is a strong focus on English, maths and RE. This includes emphasis on encouraging children to develop their spoken English well and to apply maths in everyday situations, like counting and measuring. Every day we put our faith into practice by trying to be more like Jesus.

As a school we encourage personal development – to help children grow up happy and healthy and in relationship with God who made us, saved us and sustains us. This develops children's confidence, enhancing their ability to learn, and helping them to grow up to become responsible adults who, we hope, will contribute to society in a positive way and build the Common Good.

We want a curriculum where pupils engage with their learning and have creative control over its direction, a curriculum that challenges our pupils to think for themselves. The curriculum will be as much about developing community and care as about inspiring curiosity and creativity. The curriculum will be flexible and dynamic and always open to change and modification, allowing for the children to lead their learning.

We aim to:

Focus on curriculum creativity.

Enable pupils and staff to develop opportunities to nurture their own creativity by:

- encouraging imagination and originality
- making time for them to reflect critically
- allowing space for thinking and choice
- giving freedom to fail with the confidence to try again.

Create a culture of collaboration.

Ensure an effective and creative learning culture by:

- sharing values and ethos with the whole school community
- promoting the importance of talk and collaboration in consolidating learning
- ensuring everyone has the opportunity to learn from others
- promoting teamwork and detailed planning
- developing a distributed style that shares the ownership and the load and draws others into the organisation.

Emphasise cognitive approaches.

Promote a creative learning experience in each classroom by:

- advocating a range of teaching strategies and learning styles
- promoting the importance of learning across the curriculum
- encouraging teachers to:
 - make children active partners in their learning
 - structure tasks and pace of learning to make it challenging and enjoyable.

Make a real commitment to the community.

Forge creative links with the parents and others by:

- promoting the importance of dynamic partnership
- involving parents and carers at every opportunity
- focusing on the importance of the learning environment
- extending involvement into the local community and beyond.

Promote child- centredness.

Celebrating the centrality of the children in the school by:

- promoting personal, social and spiritual aspects of the curriculum to be as important as academic aspects

Encouraging teachers to:

- develop each child's confidence, resilience, self-discipline and understanding of their learning
- make learning vivid, real and meaningful with many first-hand experiences.
- Consider skills before content.

Certain essential skills run through our curriculum.

These are:

- English – which includes phonics, reading, writing, talking and listening
- Maths – which includes using numbers, using mathematical tools and representing information in charts and graphs.

Other core skills which run through all the areas of learning are:

- Learning and thinking skills – which include investigating and looking for patterns
- Personal and emotional skills – which include working independently and setting goals
- Social skills – which include taking turns, sharing and understanding other people's feelings.
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Creativity is about:

- *connecting*: seeing relationships and combining in new ways
- *risking*: having the self-confidence and freedom to fail and keep trying
- *envisaging*: being original and imaginative about what might be
- *analysing*: asking critical and challenging questions
- *thinking*: taking time for reflection and soft thinking
- *interacting*: sharing ideas and collaborating
- *varying*: testing options and trying in different ways
- *elaborating*: exploring and fiddling and doing the unnecessary with love!

Organisation

The curriculum we provide meets the requirements of the National Curriculum 2014 and the Diocese of Westminster requirements for RE as well as providing an extensive range of learning experiences beyond the statutory requirements.

Through the focus on 'key skills' we give deeper consideration to progression and continuity of our curriculum. The curriculum has been organised into 4 whole school milestones (EYFS, Milestone 1 – KS1, Milestone 2 Y3&4 and Milestone 3 Y5&6. This has been developed to avoid putting barriers in the way of children's learning but is designed to ensure that every child has a deep understanding of the knowledge and concepts. Our emphasis is on depth and breadth with less on pace.

Themes have been chosen to allow cross curricular links to be developed. A 'Theme overview' showing these links is in development.

The themes in each year do not cover everything that is expected to be covered across the whole curriculum during any particular year. Areas that do not fit into the theme are taught as discrete areas. The main focus of the theme plans is the foundation subjects. Cross curricular links to maths and English are made where possible.

Effective Learning

In order for a creative thematic curriculum framework to lead to creative teaching and learning the teaching and learning approaches in school need to be founded on the following principles of effective learning where;

- Children know what it is they are going to learn
- Children know what they need to do to be successful learners
- Children are helped to be able to assess their own learning and the learning of others
- Children have the confidence to challenge themselves and the resilience to try, try, try again
- Children receive positive feedback that helps them to identify what they need to do next
- Children have time to reflect and review their learning
- Children feel cared about and are happy, secure, motivated and stimulated.
- The learning environment is well organised, attractive, stimulating and positive.
- Learning tasks are organised in small steps.
- Children experience a variety of learning situations, both indoors and outdoors.
- Lessons are interesting, stimulating and fun and children have the opportunity to learn through first hand, multi-sensory experience.
- Expectations are high.
- Timetabling provides opportunities for flexibility
- Spontaneity is encouraged.

Teaching and learning

As well as focussing on the development and application of skills we aim to teach exciting and challenging lessons delivering lessons in a variety of ways by providing as many first hand practical experiences as possible, such as the use of practical apparatus, artefacts and technology; visits and the use of experts. Through continual assessment, work is matched to the ability of the child through differentiated activities (or challenges), adult support, providing a level of challenge that is stimulating for pupils and questioning skills.

To be taught weekly:

- **Maths** 5 lessons of 50 mins
- **English** 5 lessons of 1 hr
- **Science** 2 hrs KS2, KS1 at least 1½ hours
- **Theme** 2 to 3 hrs – includes humanities
- **Arts** at least 2hrs
- **RE** 2hrs at KS1 and 2hrs 20mins at KS2
- **PE** 2 hrs
- **Italian** Y2 upwards 35 – 45 mins depending on age
- **Collective worship** – Every day – 5 mins at the start of the day. Monday 20 mins.
(All KS1 and KS2 classes also the opportunity to regularly attend the Parish Mass and take part in other Catholic liturgies).