

St Mark's CE Primary School

Ramslye Road
Tunbridge Wells
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Curriculum Policy

Headteacher: Simon Bird
Chair of Governors: David Hill

Our Vision

St Mark's CEP School is committed to developing children that are courageous, compassionate and creative, making excellent all-round progress so they can reach their unique potential, experience and share "life in all its fullness". We Aspire, Believe, Succeed

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Signed by Chair of Governors

Date

1 Introduction

1.1 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 to live happy, fulfilling and successful lives.

2 Values

2.1 Our school curriculum is underpinned by the Christian values that we promote at our school. 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 lead fulfilling lives.

2.2 These are the main values of our school, upon which we have based 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 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 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.
- We value independent learning as a life skill and our curriculum reflects and provides opportunities for this.

3 Aims and objectives

3.1 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 provide a broad and balanced curriculum which excites and inspires the children.
- to enable children to be creative and to develop their own thinking.
- to enable children to recognise and utilise their own best learning style.
- 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 their community and wider society.
- to fulfil all the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Rochester Diocese / Kent 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 to have high self-esteem, and to be able to live and work co-operatively with others.

Intent

The intent of our curriculum goes far beyond the outcomes seen at the end of Year 6. We have thoughtfully constructed a curriculum framework which focuses not solely on academia but on shaping our pupils into confident, passionate, life-long learners. We want our pupils to continue their journey with a secure foundation of knowledge, skills, ideas and most importantly-a relentless curiosity about the world around them. Thus, when designing this curriculum, we endeavoured to ensure it was broad, complimented by a wide range of experiences and provided pupils with far more than just academic achievement.

In our pursuit of providing St Mark's pupils with a balanced and rich education, we have crafted a curriculum based on four key constructs:

1) Knowledge

Recent research in the field of cognitive psychology has had huge implications in what we know about what makes effective teaching and learning. One such area of research is that which has explored the importance of a rich knowledge base in developing critical thinking. Critical thinking is a crucial life skill not only in careers but in day-to-day life. 'Knowledge comes into play because if we want our pupils to think critically they must have something to think about.' Dan Willingham. Willingham's extensive research in this area is a key cornerstone of our curriculum. The idea that a rich base of factual knowledge helps pupils to make connections and exponentially leads to further learning is at the heart of the design of each unit through the years. The framework for each year group details explicitly the knowledge that will be learnt and how this knowledge develops cumulatively throughout the unit.

2) Skills

Once pupils have a broad knowledge base, they need to explore, practice and master skills to allow them to apply this knowledge in a meaningful way. The St Mark's curriculum highlights these key skills and demonstrates how these are applicable in real life contexts. It is of crucial importance to us that our pupils are clear on how content relates to real life. This is integral to pupils' developing positive learning attitudes from the earliest stages of their education.

3) Experiences

Pupil's experiences are of paramount importance in the delivery of the St Mark's curriculum. It is these experiences that provide meaningful context to learning. In other words, it makes the learning 'sticky' and gives something for pupils to pin their developing understanding to. The curriculum details experiences that enrich and complement each unit and offer teachers suggested educational visits that will ultimately enhance pupil understanding. These experiences also serve a different purpose- it allows our pupils, who come from differing backgrounds, equal opportunity to experience people and places that they may not have access to otherwise. Through these

experiences, they will also develop key life skills that we too often take for granted- how to use transport systems, how to interact with others and how to conduct themselves in public- essential development of them as both student but more importantly as active citizens in our society.

4) Holistic Approach

In designing this curriculum, we have maximised opportunity for pupils to make connections in content both across units and across year groups. This holistic approach is incredibly important for two key reasons: (a) learning acts as a catalyst for further learning as mentioned previously e.g. learning about the events of WW1 allows a better appreciation of historical narratives such as 'Private Peaceful'. (b) It serves an important purpose for pupil's experience of their learning and their individual self- esteem. They are essentially able to 'hit the ground running; in subsequent learning and they develop a positive self-image as both learners and as individuals.

The curriculum covers all areas of the statutory National Curriculum and offers equal importance to all subjects - a move away from the more traditional focus on Reading, Writing and Maths. Rather, these 'core' subjects are interspersed in all subject areas to allow pupils to flourish across a range of areas and develop multiple interests and talents.

Implementation

The choice of the word 'framework' was highly deliberate. The St Mark's Curriculum has not been designed as a rigid structure that teachers must adhere to stringently but rather a framework of suggested content ready to be moulded and shaped by teachers and pupils alike. The knowledge base is key in terms of delivery but how this knowledge is explored and is extended upon is very much reflective of individual cohorts. The shifting

demographic of our pupils has further highlighted the necessity of having a responsive curriculum in place which responds to pupils' individual starting points, existing knowledge and interests. The curriculum is therefore a continually evolving document. Both teaching staff and the leadership team have contributed, and we have made a commitment as a staff to continue to review and refine this year-on-year so that our pupils are offered an outstanding education of the very highest quality.

Measuring Impact

Impact of the curriculum will be measured by evaluating both qualitative and quantitative data. Attainment and progress will be monitored closely, and qualitative data will be collected from pupils, teachers and parents to continually refine the curriculum. The impact will be seen from the KS2 SAT's data because, if successfully implemented, this holistic approach rooted in developing cultural capital will positively impact this data.

4 Organisation and planning

4.1 We agree a long-term plan for each key stage. This indicates what topics are to be taught in each term, and to which groups of children. We regularly review our long-term planning.

4.2 In our planning we give clear guidance on the objectives, success criteria and teaching strategies that we use when teaching each unit. We follow the National Curriculum for English and Mathematics and we take our planning directly from the guidance documents.

4.3 Medium/short term plans are taken from a number of prepared schemes, such as Kapow, and are adapted by the class teachers to suit the needs of our children. Learning objectives remain as stated by the scheme but the delivery of these lessons may vary to accommodate the children's needs and preferred styles of learning.

4.4 In the Early Years Foundation Stage, and at Key Stages 1 and 2 where possible, we adopt a topic approach to curriculum planning. We plan the curriculum carefully and progressively, so that there is coherence and full coverage of all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum programmes of study.

5 Inclusion

5.1 The curriculum in our school is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children.

5.2 Our teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEN
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

5.3 Our teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

5.4 Our teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

6 The Foundation Stage

6.1 The curriculum that we teach in the Early Years class meets the requirements set out in the revised Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

6.2 Our school fully supports the principle that young children learn through play, and by engaging in well-planned structured activities. Teaching in the Early Years builds on the experiences of the children in their pre-school learning. We build positive partnerships through visits by the Foundation Stage teacher to a range of other local nurseries and through other professional liaison.

6.3 During the Foundation Stage, the teacher makes continual observations to record the children's progress.

6.4 We are well aware that all children need the support of parents and carers and teachers to make good progress in school. We strive to build positive links with the families of each child by keeping them informed about their child's progress through the Learning Journey.

7 The role of the subject leader

7.1 The role of the subject leader is to:

- provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject through the creation of annual action plans that are regularly updated and annual subject reports;
- support and offer advice to colleagues on issues related to the subject through regular INSET or twilight training;
- monitor pupil progress in that subject area;

- provide efficient resource management for the subject.

The school gives subject leaders non-contact time where necessary, so that they can carry out the duties involved with their role. It is the responsibility 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. This development planning links to whole-school objectives. Each subject leader reviews the curriculum plans for their subject, ensures that there is full coverage of the National Curriculum and that progression appropriate.

8 Monitoring and review

8.1 A Governors' group is responsible for monitoring the way the school curriculum is implemented and governors are involved in activities such as RE/Worship, learning walks, scrutiny of work and planning, SEN provision mapping, marking scrutiny, assessment and pupil progress analysis.

8.2 The class teacher is responsible for the day to day organisation of the curriculum.

8.3 Subject leaders monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school. The teachers are responsible for the medium and long-term planning which is shared with the subject leader. Subject leaders also have responsibility for the purchase, storage and management of resources.