

## **Overall Curriculum Policy**

### **Introduction**

At St. Thomas' we teach the full range of National Curriculum subjects through a topic approach and a wide range of enrichment activities such as educational visits, after school clubs and specialist visitors to school. Teachers plan work on a half-termly basis using a variety of educational sources to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum (currently Primary National Curriculum 2014).. These plans are then broken down into weekly details by each teacher. Pupil progress is monitored through ongoing assessment and evaluation.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

St. Thomas' School offers equal opportunities to every child in every aspect of the curriculum and school life. See separate Equal Opportunities Policy Statement. Awareness is raised through a focus in each policy document.

### **ENGLISH**

English is core subject of the National Curriculum and great emphasis is given to the teaching of English at St.Thomas' School. We aim to ensure that children are competent in English in order to be successful in all areas of the curriculum and it is the basis through which we deliver much of our topic teaching. The teaching of English will include:

- Speaking and listening/ drama
- Reading for enjoyment and information
- Writing in a range of styles and for different audiences
- Phonics, spelling and grammar
  
- Handwriting

Usually there is a daily hour of English teaching which is mostly linked to the half termly topic so that for instance an English Objective of understanding the techniques of persuasive argument could be taught through a Victorian topic as children consider the arguments for and against child workers etc . In this way English becomes a tool for all subjects and children's learning is linked rather than being unnecessarily fragmented. English skills are developed across the whole range of subjects taught and reading is given a high profile

in the school. Phonics is taught daily in addition to the main lesson up to Year 3 and beyond where this is still necessary for some pupils.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Throughout the school we aim to equip the children with the mathematical skills which will be of use to them in everyday life. Children have a daily Maths lesson. Great emphasis is placed on the teaching of mathematics and time is specifically built into the curriculum to ensure they are able to practise skills learnt as well as acquire new ones and apply them to real life situations and problems. At St Thomas' children:

- are given the confidence to be comfortable with numbers and develop mathematical fluency
- will learn and practise mathematical skills
- are taught to use their mathematics in problem solving and everyday life and reason mathematically
- Make use of the outdoor space to enhance learning whenever possible
- Make use of a range of computer programs to develop mathematical skills and competence.
- Have access to a wide range of practical equipment.

## **SCIENCE**

Science is our way of understanding the world we live in. In science children develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding; they develop understanding of the nature processes and methods of science and understand the uses and implications of science today.

At St Thomas' we aim to give children as much practical 'hands on' experience as is possible.

## **COMPUTING**

In computing children are taught a range of skills covering basic computer science such as algorithms and debugging programs and are also taught to use technology to create, evaluate, design, and evaluate information. Integral to the computing curriculum is teaching children how to use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly, recognising acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and how to report any concerns.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

As a church school Religious Education is a very important part of our school life ;we teach children about Christianity, Judaism and Islam in some depth and also look in less depth at other religions as appropriate through the curriculum and school calendar. As a Church school our curriculum gives more coverage to Christianity but children are encouraged to respect people of all faiths and none and ask questions and explore belief in general.

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

There is a daily act of Christian worship for all children which takes place either in the school hall or in classrooms. Whole school worship takes place on Mondays and Fridays and a Celebration Assembly is held on Tuesdays. Parents are invited to our weekly Friday Worship. In addition we hold services at St Thomas' Church throughout the year, especially Easter and Christmas and the vicar and other local worship leaders regularly lead our collective worship, as do all our teaching staff and the children are actively involved and encouraged also to take leading roles in class or whole school worship.

## **RIGHT TO WITHDRAW FROM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION & WORSHIP**

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education and the daily act of worship. However, parents should think very carefully about the practicalities of this because, as a church school, opportunities for religious education often arise spontaneously and are used.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (P.S.H.E.)**

At St. Thomas' we aim to educate the child as a whole person. The content of the PSHE curriculum may be taught at times through other lessons e.g. through science for health and growth but discrete lessons are also necessary. As part of the curriculum we have opportunities for 'Circle Time' or group discussions in each class whereby pupils discuss issues, feelings and concerns and how to manage conflict and relationships. We teach a specific Difference and Diversity unit in Year 3 which helps children to understand the diverse ethnic mix of people who live locally but are in a minority currently at this school. We have a School Council with members from Y2--6. Each class has 2 council representatives who feed information about pupils' issues and concerns to the Council and this often leads to direct action to improve areas of school life.

## **SEX EDUCATION**

We have a sex education policy that states that children's questions are answered accurately and appropriately according to the age of the child concerned. The governors have agreed to provide formal puberty and sex education lessons to all Year 4- 6 pupils in the school. This will be taught as either as part of science and PSHE topics and will be planned and delivered in conjunction with the school nurse. Parents are given the chance to view all materials used before the lessons take place. The Policy for teaching sex education is reviewed annually.

## **HISTORY**

History is the study of certain periods and events from the past. It is taught as part of a topic based approach and children are encouraged to:

- Research independently
- Use artefacts and historical documents
- Record information in a variety of forms
- Develop opinions and attitudes towards historical events
- Recognise the influence that history has had on the present

## **GEOGRAPHY**

Geography skills are taught as part of a topic based approach. Children are provided with opportunities to:

- investigate the human and physical features of their local area and contrasting localities
- ask questions about the world around them
  
- experience fieldwork studies, including a week's residential trip in Year 6

The school has an active Eco club which supports the school's work in educating children to develop an appreciation of the world in which we live and a desire to care for it.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Our aim in P.E. is to encourage enjoyment and to develop physical fitness, teamwork and participation. During the twice weekly P.E. sessions all children participate in a range of physical activities including:

gymnastics  
athletics  
dance and movement  
swimming  
skills and games  
outdoor activities

Swimming takes place at Clough Hall Technology College for our Year 4 children who swim for approximately 30 weeks in the year. Year 6 children attend on Outdoor Education Centre for one week, covering a range of challenging outdoor pursuits. A range of Sporting competitions take place between the cluster of local schools and across the local area to give pupils a variety of sporting opportunities.

## **ART**

Our aim is to encourage children to express their ideas and feelings and communicate them to others using a variety of media including:

pencil  
chalks and pastels  
paint  
printing  
collage  
pottery

The children also consider the style and work of artists, including masters and modern works and where possible this work supports and enhances their topic study. We are fortunate to have an art graduate specialist teaching assistant in school who liaises with class teachers and takes the majority of art lessons across the school.

## **DESIGN TECHNOLOGY**

Design technology encourages children to design and make products to solve real life problems Children have opportunities to:

- Design
- Make
- Evaluate
- Develop technical knowledge

Within design and technology children also explore healthy diets and cooking techniques.

## **MUSIC**

Music plays an important part in the life of the school. Our aim is for all children to:

listen to a variety of music  
 play percussion instruments  
 appreciate music  
 perform before an audience  
 sing confidently  
 record their compositions  
 compose creatively

Children in KS2 are invited to join the choir and are able to perform to an audience on a number of occasions. There are opportunities to be taught to play a musical instrument by visiting instrumental teachers. KS2 Music is taught by a specialist Music teacher who supports assigned KS1 staff with musical competence to deliver the curriculum for Foundation stage and KS1 Y3 have whole class violin lessons for one term and Y5 whole class brass lessons to ensure all children have the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument.

## **FRENCH**

Children learn French in each of the KS2 classes. They are taught a basic vocabulary, to talk about themselves and to record accurately. This gives them a fun introduction to a foreign language at a time when they are most receptive to new language learning. One of our KS2 teachers is a language specialist who teaches Y4, 5 & 6 and supports Y3 staff in the delivery of the curriculum.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

The school has a designated Special Educational Needs Coordinator who is responsible for ensuring the school meets the individual needs of children who are assessed as needing additional support to make adequate progress. Together with parents and class teachers, the SENCO supports the establishment of an Individual Education Plan( I.E.P) which sets out small targets for children to work towards and the support that will be provided by all parties to achieve them. IEPs are reviewed termly.

We have close links with numerous outside agencies who can provide the school with extra support when appropriate. .

## **ABLE PUPILS**

Able pupils' needs are catered for through curriculum planning and are monitored by the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator and head Teacher. Work is highly differentiated to provide challenge for individuals, encouraging breadth of knowledge but where appropriate, use of the following year's learning objectives are used. Progress is monitored through the school tracking system.

## **HOMEWORK**

We feel it is very important that parents are involved in their children's school work. Home learning opportunities are set on a regular basis and we expect the work to be completed conscientiously and to a good standard. Parents are asked to provide a quiet working area and encourage their child with their homework. Reception and |Key Stage 1 homework is centred around reading, spelling, tables and finding things out. Increasingly the school makes use of Educational Websites with a homework facility that can be accessed from home.

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