

If children don't remember what we have taught them, then even the richest curriculum is futile. Remembering knowledge is progress. So, as well as including the richest, best material in our curriculum, we have structured it in a way that makes remembering almost inevitable.

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Curriculum Policy 2021

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Useful documents linked to this policy

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Overview of events of the year

1. Policy aim

The aim of this policy is to outline St. Mary's Catholic Primary School's approach to and expectations for teaching and learning across the curriculum and the means by which it strives to achieve outstanding teaching and learning practices.

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School is a school that centres on children; what they need, how they learn and how they develop. Our children are happy and secure at school and the ethos of putting children first is reflected in every aspect of our day to day practice. Our mission statement 'Work, pray, play together' is lived out everyday and is the centre of our core.

Our aim is to enable our pupils to be resilient, resourceful, responsible learners who have the confidence, skills and attitudes to be successful life-long achievers. We aim to promote a learning culture so that pupils have a love of learning and the desire to continue to learn. We aim to give our pupils every opportunity to succeed. Through this policy we aim to promote best practice and to establish consistency across the whole school. It aims to ensure that the children are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to a consistently high level of pupil achievement and attitude.

We believe that children have a RIGHT to receive outstanding teaching, to enable them to access outstanding learning.

3. General principles underlying this policy

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School's staff share and uphold the values and principles set out in this policy.

Academic staff receive training, guidance and support, enabling them to contribute to the provision of an outstanding curriculum and outstanding teaching and learning at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, as set out in the group of curriculum policies and procedures that support this policy

The children are encouraged to behave in a manner that facilitates their learning, development and progression.

4. St. Mary's Catholic Primary School's purpose

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School purpose is to prepare our pupils for life in a global society and success in a global economy, enabling them to realise their potential through a varied learning experience.

- We ensure that curriculum coverage is broad and balanced and provides pupils with many opportunities to enhance their learning through educational visits and engaging activities.
- We enable pupils from all nationalities, backgrounds and abilities to reach their maximum potential, academically and as individuals, achieving the best possible results which will eventually result in a rewarding career in their field of choice.
- We provide innovative approaches, diversity and breadth of programmes, outstanding teaching and learning and strive to transform the educational experience of every individual.

5. St. Mary's Catholic Primary School's context

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School pupils are aged between 2 and 11 year's old. Our academic policies recognise the diversity of our student body and provide an effective operating framework to support and stretch our pupils. St. Mary's Catholic Primary School represents the first experience of education for many of our pupils and, as such, our teachers act as key role models in shaping a positive attitude to learning and subsequent success.

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School academic policies should be read in conjunction with the full range of curriculum and welfare policies.

6. St. Mary's Catholic Primary School rationale

At St. Mary's, we believe that the curriculum should enthuse, engage and motivate children to learn and foster their curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.

We believe that children learn best when activities are well planned, ensuring progress in the short, medium and long term.

We also believe that learning is at its peak when the learning environment is ordered, the atmosphere is purposeful, and the children feel safe.

7. Curriculum coverage

The previous curriculum offer has been adapted to ensure that learning is fully embedded through meaningful first-hand experiences and meet the needs of the pupils. Extensive research has been carried out (EEF, Ofsted, Sutton Trust, NFER) and the new curriculum offer will allow individual teachers considerable authority over classroom practice. The offer will be measured termly and evaluations on how well the initiative improves the education and life chances for the children will be measured. Adjustments will then be made based on evidence and further research.

The new curriculum offer will reduce formal English and maths sessions and allow these skills to be taught through other curriculum areas. In essence, the core subjects, RE, English, maths and science will remain to be taught as discrete lessons, however, they will also be entwined into the foundation subjects, history, geography, art and design, design technology, modern foreign languages and physical education. The curriculum offer supports children's SMSC development.

Class structure will be set out in advance to allow for the children to experience more real-life situations, they will leave the confines of the classroom more regularly and will use their learning in more meaningful conditions. At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, every pupil will be provided with the opportunities, resources and support they need to fulfil their academic potential.

The changes will allow the children to build up their knowledge in history and geography, e.g. starting locally, then nationally before studying international topics. See long term plan for additional information. The whole school will be working coherently; display work and assemblies will allow for the learning to be embedded deeper. The teaching will build on previous learning will afford children opportunities to review what has been learned. Our curriculum has built into it many enrichment opportunities. Whole school events and learning with children of different ages are key features of our school.

Teachers will be well equipped to teach and deliver the broad and balanced curriculum; expertise from across Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust will be utilised to support the teachers and the pupils.

The updated carefully crafted curriculum will guarantee that pupils are provided with a broad range of opportunities which they otherwise not experience. We want to prepare the pupils at St. Mary's for their future and inspire them to learn. If children don't remember what we have taught them, then even the richest curriculum is futile. Remembering knowledge is progress. So, as well as including the richest, best material in our curriculum, we have structured it in a way that makes remembering almost inevitable.

Currently, mornings at St. Mary's Catholic School are primarily devoted to developing the core subjects of English and Maths; however, we use the school time efficiently to ensure all the skills needed are taught and practiced. We continue to emphasise the importance of English and maths, but this is not at the expense of other subjects. There are times where it is right for children to receive additional help with English and maths at the expense of another subject, however this to allow them to reach a point at which they can access the curriculum properly.

Curriculum newsletters are provided by staff to parents every half term. These include full coverage of the core and non-core subjects. Parental engagement involves invites to class liturgies, class performance and hands-on days.

SMSC is built in to RE, assemblies, pastoral care sessions and whole class daily teaching and situations.

The curriculum offer is based on cognitive psychology theories. Learning will be revisited periodically; new knowledge will connect with existing knowledge in the childrens minds, which gives rise to understanding. As learners develop unconscious competence and fluency, they will develop new skills. Progress at St. Mary's is not defined by securing the next data point; when learners attain within a well-sequenced, well-constructed curriculum, they make progress.

Every opportunity to enhance the curriculum is seized and a programme of whole school enrichment events is planned each year. Curriculum coverage is tracked and enables us to check the breadth and balance of the curriculum. The children will gain a real-life/ hands-on experience at least once every month- this includes visits/trips and visitors.

Teachers have the control to name their topics, e.g. castles could be 'Defenders of the North' as the foci should spread out further than teaching about castles.

The curriculum areas are described below, however, see subject specific curriculum policies for additional information.

➤ RE

Religious Education is the 'core of the core curriculum' in a Catholic school (Pope St John Paul II). Placing RE at the core of the curriculum in Catholic schools helps the school to fulfil its mission to educate the whole person in discerning the meaning of their existence, since 'Religious Education is concerned not only with intellectual knowledge but also includes emotional and affective learning. It is in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of what it is to be human truly becomes clear. Without religious education, pupils would be deprived of an essential element of their formation and personal development, which helps them attain a vital harmony between faith and culture.' (Religious Education curriculum Directory p4). Furthermore, religiously literate children and young people are able to engage in a fully informed critique of all knowledge, 'leading, for example, to an understanding of the relationship between science and religion or history, and between theology, sport and the human body.' (Religious Education Curriculum Directory p4).

➤ English

English is taught daily across the week at St Mary's. This includes discrete writing sessions, discrete phonic/ spelling sessions and discrete reading sessions. Handwriting sessions and speaking and listening skills are embedded into other curriculum areas. Reading, writing and spelling are also taught within the foundation subjects.

Writing is delivered on a three-weekly programme; full coverage of the National Curriculum skills are taught during these sessions and then re-visited in foundation subject lessons with the aim that the pupil's long term memory is successfully altered to remember more. Opportunities are given to apply English subject skills across the foundation subjects, e.g. retelling a myth or legend using narrative technique in history.

➤ Maths

Maths is taught during discrete lessons each week where full National curriculum coverage is taught. Discrete maths is also taught during foundation subjects, e.g. calculating pulse rates in PE, measuring distances in geography. The real-life situations help to deepen the knowledge.

➤ Science

Science is delivered across the school by a primary science specialist. Progression is made year on year with this consistent approach. Links are made across the curriculum, e.g. habitats in geography, a visit to an insect house to study minibeasts, will cover aspects of science, technology, SMSC and geography.

➤ Geography

The main geography topics are taught across the autumn and spring terms. EYFS and Key stage one classes cover our local area and build up the UK based geography. Key stage two focus on human and physical geography across the local area, North East, UK, Europe and the World. The curriculum coverage builds upon each other to guarantee that new knowledge connects with prior knowledge. Children experience outings to make the learning real, e.g. tracking the river, measuring the footfall and distances at local shops. Writing stimulus is provided by excursions, video and visitors.

➤ History

The main historical topics are covered in the autumn and summer terms. The whole school identifies changes in Britain across the summer term, with KS2 working in chronological order. The summer term focuses on world history. The curriculum areas are combined, e.g. a trip to Segadunum covers both history and geography. A whole school approach enables combined projects and displays in school. Writing stimulus is provided by excursions, video and visitors.

➤ Languages

French is taught within KS2 classes at St. Mary's Catholic School by a primary languages' specialist. Although it is only a compulsory at KS2, it is introduced in EYFS/KS1 by the class teachers with the support from the specialist teacher.

➤ Computing

Class teachers incorporate computing into all subjects. However, discrete computing is taught with the support of specialist teachers. Specialist teachers from Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust provide support to our teachers where appropriate.

➤ Art and design

Art and design skills are taught each fortnight for three half terms of the year, and are combined into the geography or history topics if appropriate. Discrete skills are taught as the main objective; however, stimulus is provided by another subject area. The school's outside learning area is utilised at least once a half term by each class. At the end of each half term, we hold a focus day where the pupils incorporate their skills to make an overall product.

➤ Design and technology

Design and technology is taught each fortnight for three half terms of the year, and are combined into the geography or history topics if appropriate. Discrete skills are taught as the main objective; however, stimulus is provided by another subject area. The school's outside learning area is utilised at least once a half term by each class. At the end of each half term, we hold a focus day where the pupils incorporate their skills to make an overall product.

➤ Physical education

PE is taught at least once a week by either specialist PE teachers or by the class teachers. The curriculum is linked where possible, e.g. the measurement of distances and speed. KS2 children attend swimming lessons at a local pool. Increased lessons have been arranged as catch up for lessons missed with COVID.

➤ Music

Music is taught weekly across the school by a specialist music teacher. Music is mainly taught as a discrete subject.

➤ Theme weeks

To further embed the curriculum and ensure full coverage in a broad and balanced manner, we run specialist curriculum weeks.

Reading week: the week is built around World Book Day. The school provides unique opportunities for the children to develop their reading skills. No Pen Day ensures that the children focus on speaking and listening with activities based on a book and allows the children to perform in front of the whole school. Authors visit school during this week and at one point in the week, the whole school reads the same picture book at the same time and they produce work related to it- ending up with 'A Display in a Day'.

STEAM week: the children explore a theme often supported by material given by British Science week. The school provides external science specialists to deliver science lessons which engage and enthuse. The week includes science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics.

Mental Health week: each day begins with an assembly based on current mental health issues, e.g. worries, resilience, fitness or giving. The theme continues in pastoral care sessions.

MAD week: a combination of music, art and drama with a history focus.

8. Approach to educational visits

We ensure that all tasks and activities that the children do are safe. When we plan to take children out of school, we first inform parents and obtain their permission via ParentPay.

At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, we provide pupils with a rich and visits programme where pupils experience a wide variety of opportunities to enhance their learning in and outside their community.

9. Extra- curricular activities

We provide a range of extracurricular activities which are accessed by many children and celebrated in our Friday assemblies. There is a range of after school clubs for pupils to extend their enjoyment of learning. Many opportunities for families to get involved in learning are planned throughout the year.

10. Children with additional needs

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School is an inclusive school, where the primary focus is on the children and how they can attain their full potential both educationally and socially.

Students with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), including those who are gifted, are identified and managed through a linked-up, expert-led process

Our curriculum takes into account the needs of all groups of learners, (boys, girls, disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, (SEND), previously more able, learners with English as an additional language (EAL), learners with social and emotional needs, looked after children and all other specific needs) and in keeping with our ethos of putting the child first we aim to teach in a way that meets the child where they are, considers all their barriers to learning and gives them the best chance of success.

SEND funding is used to support pupils to access all areas of the curriculum, e.g. an additional adult to support in the swimming pool rather than from the side lines.

11. Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning should be a professional, positive, engaging and rewarding partnership between pupils and teachers

Teachers should ensure that their pupils fully understand the learning objectives within the lesson at every stage. In turn, the children should reflect on their own progress towards achieving their goals and share responsibility for their learning outcomes- see the marking and feedback policy.

Teachers should develop the skills, confidence and motivation in pupils to become successful independent learners now and in preparation for life in secondary education.

Teachers of all subjects should support the acquisition of English language skills and open cultural boundaries that may narrow pupils' approach to learning as part of every lesson.

The teacher will share the learning objectives and children should help determine success criteria for the lesson

Lesson planning is based on prior learning and throughout the learning process, active, formative assessment is required from teachers, teaching assistants and children to ensure that the expected rate of progress is being made. Every effort is made to respond to pupils' misconceptions or mistakes at the earliest opportunity to ensure further learning is not hindered in any way. Pupils are expected to respond to feedback given by the teacher and opportunities for this are built into lessons. Feedback may be written or oral depending on the task and needs of the children. Pupils may also be involved in giving each other feedback.

12. Planning

Thorough planning which is tailored to need enables all pupils to make progress in every session. Long and medium term plans are crafted to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum. They are adapted according to pupils' prior understanding and are designed to build on previous learning. Curriculum coverage packs travel up the year groups with the cohorts to ensure full national curriculum coverage.

Knowledge-rich combined with skills-rich.

Programmes that enable progression into higher education have been specially developed to meet the needs of the cohort

Curriculum policies are in place for every programme and are reviewed and updated annually to reflect the changing needs and goals of students, changes to the international academic landscape, and in response to the self-evaluation processes

Content and delivery is planned at every stage, from a programme to an individual lesson level, to meet clearly defined learning objectives

Programme-level planning takes the form of a set of annually reviewed and updated curriculum policies, informed by the up-to-date curriculum and subject knowledge of academic managers and the outcomes of self-evaluation processes

Subject/module-specific planning takes the form of detailed schemes of work, which are adopted and updated by teachers individually throughout the delivery of each programme. In addition, module specifications for externally accredited programmes are reviewed annually

Individual lesson planning, based on evolving schemes of work, is supported by guidance according to St. Mary's requirements for an Outstanding Lesson and Teachers' Standards

Schemes of work and individual lesson plans are tailored to meet the needs of each student group

Teachers are informed regarding the educational background and culture, language ability, age range and gender-mix of the students in the classes they teach, through student and class profile reports

Teachers evaluate the academic ability of their students at the beginning of their programme of study, using baseline academic data and the outcomes of cognitive abilities tests

Teachers apply their experience and understanding of different learning cultures to plan lessons that engage and actively involve their students

13. Home learning

Home learning is linked to the work being undertaken in class and includes practice of the basic skills, spellings, time tables and reading. Opportunities are given in class to share good home learning and rewards and acknowledgement given for excellent effort.

The website and Class DoJo provides a good link between home and school and contains many basic facts for children to learn at home.

See Home-learning policy for additional information.

14. Curriculum assessment

Detailed assessments of pupil's needs take place across all curriculum subjects. This results in work which engages pupils' interest and consistently challenges their thinking.

We complete whole class weekly assessment sheets to feed immediately back into planning.

Internal assessments are carried out effectively, they help learners to embed and use knowledge fluently and assists staff to identify clear next steps for learners; the information is also used to shape the development of the future curriculum.

15. Staff development

St. Mary's Catholic School is dedicated to teacher's professional development. The Headteacher supports the staff to enable professional learning, raises pupil attainment and transforms the opportunities for pupils.

The school's curriculum offer focuses on reducing the pressure on teachers. Subject specialist teachers are provided by Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust to support the delivery and skills across the core and foundation subjects. Additional teachers are employed by St. Mary's Catholic School to reduce the workload and provide

Teachers should approach teaching and learning with an open mind, actively seek new ways to motivate and engage pupils and utilise the technologies and other resources available to them to enhance the teaching and learning experience.

Teachers will be provided with the opportunities, resources, training and support they need to fulfil their teaching potential. Teachers are encouraged to be reflective, assessing their own performance and development needs, and to work together to share best practice and support each other's development.

See Staff Handbook for additional information.

