

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Infant School



CURRICULUM POLICY STATEMENT

Introduction

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Infant School curriculum is planned to give a structured and wide-ranging education in a supportive and secure environment. The school seeks to provide activities that meet the intellectual, social, physical and moral needs in ways that will stimulate pupils' interests and imagination and fully realise their potential.

We aim to:

- Provide pupils with an introduction to the core knowledge that they need to be educated citizens, and
- To introduce pupils to the best that has been thought and said; and help engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.

The school has developed creativity into the curriculum and the following 6 key skills are developed across the whole curriculum:

1. Communication
2. The application of number
3. Information Technology
4. Working with others
5. Improving own learning and performance
6. Problem solving

The curriculum provision

Within the **Foundation Stage** [Nursery and Reception] the curriculum is planned following the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The curriculum and learning within the Early Years will underpin all future learning and activities are taught through the areas of learning:

The prime areas of learning:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The specific areas of learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

We will also look at the **learning characteristics** of the children:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

The school supports the principle that young children learn best through practical experiences and play based activities. Children are encouraged to play and work independently and activities are undertaken both the indoor and outdoor class areas. The curriculum provides a balance of adult directed and child initiated activities. To facilitate transition between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 discrete English and Maths lessons are introduced in the summer term.

Within **Key Stage 1** [Year 1 and Year 2] the school offers a full range of National Curriculum subjects - English, Mathematics, Science, ICT and R.E. as core; Geography, History, Art, Music,

DT and PE as foundation subjects. The school also provides a Personal, Social and Health Education programme. The school has adopted the **International Primary Curriculum [IPC]** within Key Stage 1 [IPC Milepost 1]. This curriculum is used in schools throughout the world and is linked directly to National Curriculum requirements.

It is a thematic approach to learning, linking subjects and putting learning into context for children. Children learn in a variety of ways and the IPC supports different learning styles as well as the varying aptitudes and talents of its pupils whilst also supporting creative development and thinking.

The main focus for IPC is;

- ✓ Academic and personal development
- ✓ Development of global awareness
- ✓ Active, engaging and meaningful learning for children
- ✓ Brain friendly learning

Each theme/ topic is split into teaching units of approximately 8 weeks long. Each unit has an overarching theme with explicit learning goals for each subject. Subjects within each unit are taught in blocks. Every unit starts with an Entry Point and Knowledge Harvest, to capture the children's interest and to establish their learning starting point. At the end of each unit a celebration event (exit point) is held to allow the children to share their learning with the school and wider community.

Maths, English and R.E. are taught alongside as separate subjects. English has a strong cross-curricular dimension and different genres of writing are used within the IPC recording activities.

Wherever possible Science is taught within the IPC unit; in addition Science Weeks are held each term to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum Attainment Targets.

Assessment

Assessment is continuous and takes place in all areas of school and in a variety of ways, both formative and summative. This ongoing assessment allows us to build a complete picture of a pupil's development, intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically.

Children in the Foundation Stage are tracked and assessed using the 'Development Matters' assessments, where every child is assessed in age related bands against a range of criteria and against the Early Learning Goals within the Early Years Curriculum. Children in Key Stage 1 are assessed against the National Curriculum and at the end of Year 2 undertake End of Key Stage 1 Tasks and Tests, which are supported by ongoing teacher assessment levels.

Special Educational Needs

Each child in the school is encouraged to develop at his or her own pace, but where a child is identified as having special needs, [either physical, emotional, social or learning] a programme of support is agreed with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and the class teachers. If this fails, then help is sought from the appropriate outside agency, following consultation with the parent(s) or carer(s).

Individual subject areas

Religious Education and Worship

Religious Education and Worship are in accordance with the Archdiocese's agreed programme, 'Come and See'. Specific aspects of religion, relationships, morality and the natural world are covered. Though mainly Christian based, other religions and beliefs are explored.

The aims of Religious Education in St Margaret Mary's Catholic Infant School are:

- To promote knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and life
- To promote knowledge and understanding of the response of faith to the ultimate questions of human life, its origin and purpose
- To promote skills required to engage in examination of and reflection upon religious belief and practice.

English

Teaching is structured to help children further develop skills in speaking and listening, reading, writing and spelling. A variety of teaching styles will be used, for example drama, discussion, creative writing, as methods of developing expression of ideas, questions, thoughts, views and facts.

Reading

A wide variety of reading materials is available and is catalogued using book bands. Children read frequently to an adult in school. Books are sent home regularly for the enjoyment of sharing a story and reading practice. Picture, story and library books are used in addition to a range of 'core' materials. Group reading is used as appropriate. Teaching of initial sounds and blends encourages reading confidence, at the same time giving firm foundations for spelling and writing skills. Children will learn the sounds that letters make as well as the letter names. A structured programme of Phonic teaching is provided, to enable children to have a good start to reading. St Margaret Mary's follows the 'Letters and Sounds' reading programme which is based on phonics and involves 20 minutes direct teaching each day.

Writing and Spelling

Children are encouraged to write as soon as they start school, using 'emergent writing' and are given lots of time to write. They are taught correct letter formation as soon as their pencil control allows. During their time at school, children are given many opportunities to write for a variety of different reasons e.g. creative/story writing, poetry, letters, reports, science experiment write ups, etc. As they learn to write they also learn initial sounds, phonic blends and letter strings. Spelling is felt to be an important skill and is taught in a systematic way, as are simple rules of grammar.

Speaking, Listening and Thinking Skills

All children need to develop their ability to listen, think and discuss. They need to think ideas and issues through, ask relevant questions and justify their opinions. This is done for example, through 'Talking Partners', small group sessions, investigation and problem solving. Plenty of time is given to open-ended questioning, discussion and context drama, to gain skills that will help them to be life long learners.

Mathematics

Mathematics is taught to be necessary, purposeful and meaningful, e.g. using the skills of addition and subtraction in a shopping situation brings more meaning to the learning. The revised National Numeracy Strategy provides the basic structure for our mathematics teaching. We use a variety of materials, teaching and learning styles. Children will be taught to use mental arithmetic, multiplication tables and other mathematical skills.

Science

Relevant opportunities, activities and experiences are used to encourage children to acquire the skills of observing. The children will be encouraged to observe with care and precision and with measurements where necessary. It may include attention to texture, smell, taste and the ability

to make sounds and the use of observation aids such as video film, photographs and computers. They will also hypothesise and be encouraged to put forward ideas that attempt to explain some happening or feature. Predicting will form another activity where children will be encouraged to put forward ideas about what may happen in the future or what will be found that has so far not been found. A core activity will be experimenting where the children will be encouraged to devise fair, safe and accurate tests. Children will be taught the various ways of recording, observation, recording and analysing and learning in science. This work will be done through topics and themes.

Information & Communication Technology and Computing

Pupils will be taught how to use computers, roamers, cameras, CDROM and have safe access to the Internet. Information & Communication Technology is used to support all the areas of the curriculum. In addition to an IT Suite every class has stand alone computers. Children will be encouraged through ICT to communicate ideas and information in a variety of ways; to capture, store, gain access, change and interpret information and to assess the content and presentation of information from various sources. They will also carry out mathematical investigations, make use of ICT equipment to draw, design, make or compose; measure and control movement; and consider and discuss the social and ethical implications of ICT.

Design & Technology

Children will work with a number of materials, including plastic, metal, card, wood and food. They will learn how to use tools correctly and safely. Designing and making assignments in which children have the opportunity to work through the whole design and making process. They will focus on practical tasks, activities where the children engage in critical analysis to understand the principles of design, methods of manufacture and the appropriate use of materials. The aims are to build upon their practical capability in designing and making; be encouraged to stimulate originality and enterprise; develop skills using a range of materials and techniques and develop an understanding of the needs of design in order to evaluate their own and others work. They will investigate and question designs and contrast own ideas and develop vocabulary skills through using appropriate technical language to describe processes.

History and Geography

Work is based on examination of evidence and artefacts. Visits are made within the local area and further afield to provide learning relevant to the children's experiences and locality. Other countries, life styles and traditions are introduced. Through the teaching and learning of history and geography, children are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility for looking after the earth and of belonging to their community/society. They learn to value the culture and traditions they inherit from their families and from the community.

Art and Music

Practical, creative and imaginative work is encouraged through the expressive arts using a range of materials and techniques appropriate to the children and the activity. Aesthetic awareness and an understanding of our culture and artistic traditions are developed. Topics are chosen to include understanding of other cultures and traditions. There is a good range of pitched and non-pitched percussion instruments.

Physical Education

Each child is expected to take part in the full range of activities unless medically unfit. These include games, gymnastics, dance and learning basic skills of ball control, catching and throwing.

Health Education, Personal and Social Education

Children are given opportunities to develop skills of working together, playing co-operative games and developing an understanding of and acceptance of the similarities and differences between people. Children are given accurate information about health matters, thereby encouraging the acquisition of healthy patterns of behaviour. Teachers frequently invite external visitors, such as the school nurse, to speak to the pupils about topics designated within the curriculum.

Sex Education

Sex Education is not taught in the school but the foundations are laid and dealt with in topics that include growth, birth, life and death. It is also dealt with in the Personal and Social Education of the school in keeping with legislation and in such a manner as to encourage pupils to have due regard to relationships and the value of family life.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural

In St. Margaret Mary's Catholic Infant School we aim to encourage pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the curriculum and the life of the school, at the level of each individual child's understanding. This will be done in order to support the distinctive nature and ethos of the school and through living our Mission Statement 'loving, learning, growing, together with Jesus.'

Children will be given opportunities to explore their own and other religious beliefs and cultures; through Collective Worship; through teaching the values of forgiveness, freedom, tolerance, respect and relationships that are to be lived out in the daily life of the school by the whole school community.

Reviewed and amended March 2014