

## Curriculum Statement 2018/2019

Having an interesting and stimulating curriculum which is well matched to the needs of the children is an essential requirement for a successful school. Without this, children will not gain the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve well and to become the well-rounded individuals we want them to be. This statement summarises key elements of our curriculum including recent changes made as part of our ongoing evaluation and review.

**There are some key principles that underpin the way our curriculum is designed:**

- **What are we required to teach?** It is important that we follow both the National Curriculum (what all schools are required to teach) and the Diocesan approved RE scheme 'Come and See' (what the Bishop requires us to teach as a Catholic school)
- **What do we have flexibility with?** Within the National Curriculum there are some areas where we can choose from a range of what is recommended e.g. in history or some of the methods used in maths. In making these decisions we choose what we think will best deliver interesting, relevant lessons that are based around our core principles (see below)
- **What else do we consider?** First of all we think about our ethos, vision and core principles on which our school is built. This means the things that are important to us and why. These differ from school to school. Secondly and most importantly we have to think about what our children need. As our school community changes we have to strike the right balance between adapting our curriculum accordingly without 'chopping and changing' all the time which is confusing to both children and parents. This means we have to be clear about the best ways that children learn, how knowledge and skills are acquired and retained and then make sure our curriculum delivers this.

### **What do we want for our children?**

In our school we want children to achieve well both academically and socially and grow into well rounded citizens for the future. They will be people who know the value of working hard, respecting each other and our differences with aspirations for themselves which are high but achievable. To do this we need to build a community of learning where children from different backgrounds, cultures and faiths feel a sense of belonging and commitment. This will only happen if:

- ✓ Children achieve expected levels in reading, writing and maths so they can access the next stage of their education with a secure foundation
- ✓ Children are taught to speak and communicate clearly and know how this impacts on their future life chances
- ✓ Children are taught that hard work will bring about success
- ✓ Children know they have a responsibility to learn as well as teachers having a responsibility to teach
- ✓ Children learn to regulate their own behaviour by being part of a school where there are clear rules and expectations, where they are taught the difference between right and wrong and the impact of their actions on themselves and others
- ✓ Children are given opportunities to learn leadership skills so they become more responsible, independent and know they can help each other to improve

- ✓ Children find out about themselves by being given opportunities beyond their 'comfort zone' e.g. drama, singing, performance, sport etc. This includes having the opportunity to take part in an after school club and having the opportunity to 'perform' for their parents at least once in the school year
- ✓ Children are taught about respect and equality through our RE and equality curriculum
- ✓ Children know how to keep themselves safe
- ✓ Children know the importance of being physically active and leading a healthy lifestyle
- ✓ Children enjoy coming to school

We know that these things won't happen by 'accident' because they do not come naturally to children. So our curriculum places a greater emphasis on them. By necessity they have a higher priority than other things but it is this that gives our curriculum its strength and equips our children with all that they need.

We divide our curriculum into 'entitlement' and 'enhancement'. Entitlement covers the key things that all children need in order to succeed such as being able to read, do maths etc. Enhancement are the 'extras', the additional things that we believe are important.

### **Enhancement:**

**RE and Equalities** - Because we are a Catholic school there is a greater emphasis on learning about religion and learning from religion. We not only learn about Christianity, we learn about Islam and Judaism as important world religions too. We place a greater emphasis on respect and self-control, good behaviour, prayer and meditation because we believe that every person is made in the image of God and this is an integral part of being a faith school. We have a well thought out programme that prepares children for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century without contradicting the key teaching of our faith. For example, we teach that in the Catholic faith marriage is the union between one man and one woman but in society it can be the union of one man with one man and one woman with one woman. In Reception and Key Stage 1 we do this through the telling of stories with an equality theme and in Key Stage 2 an outside organisation runs a series of workshops for each year group on Rejecting racism, challenging stereotypes and celebrating different families.

**Children as leaders** - We create opportunities for our children to be both leaders and to be able to work as part of a team by them being Buddies to a younger child, Mind mentors, Agents for Change, Behaviour Buddies, Playground Pals, Liturgy Team members etc. We give them specific training in how to undertake these roles well and time within the curriculum to practise these skills.

**Performance and presentation skills** - We believe that being able to speak clearly and express themselves properly is a life skill that needs to be taught. This can be a challenge so regular practise is a feature of our curriculum. It is for this reason that we give every child the opportunity to learn these skills through performance and presentation workshops. Every child gets a chance and has the opportunity to present to their class or whole school with lessons from a performance teacher.

**Singing** - In our school every child learns to sing and has an opportunity to perform for their parents at some point in the year. We do this because there are many benefits of learning to sing: Development of memory, concentration, clear speech through work on diction, listening skills, self-discipline and working with others. Not only does singing help support

children's emotional well-being, the skills involved help children understand rhyme which is a key component of identifying sounds in words (phonics) and learning to read. For those who excel in drama or performance there are opportunities for them to showcase their talents in Key Stage performances.

**PE** - For those children who lack the confidence or skill to participate fully in sport we have extra PE activities on a Monday afternoon with a qualified coach so they can gain the skills necessary to be active participants in their 'normal' regular PE lessons. As with performance we are introducing the role of pupil sports coaches to work with younger children.

### **Entitlement:**

We have reviewed all our provision in this area and since 2016 have been making some fundamental changes.

### **What actions have we taken and why?**

In 2014 our curriculum had to change because the national curriculum changed. We took this opportunity to look again at what we do and whether it could be improved. Below are the results of our on-going curriculum review since then:

### **Reading and Phonics:**

**Phonics** (sounds that letters make): This is a key part in learning to read. Our core programme is Letters and Sounds, supported by Thrass and Phonics Bug.

- ✓ Phonics is delivered through daily sessions in Reception and Years 1 and 2
- ✓ Children's progress is reviewed regularly (half termly) and children move between phase groups according to the progress they make.
- ✓ For those children who continue to find phonics difficult by the end of Year 2 additional resources for individual programmes are available in Key Stage 2 (e.g. Word Wasp)

**Key words:** These are the words children learn 'off by heart' and this is an important part in learning both to read and spell. They are taught in school and practised at home. Words are now in the back of the reading diaries which are given out at the start of the year.

**Reading books:** Reading is divided into the practise of skills at home (individual reading) and the teaching of reading at school. Our 2016/2017 review has resulted in the following:

- ✓ Books in Reception and Years 1 and 2 are much more 'scheme' based and not 'real books'. The advantage of this is that they are structured carefully and as a result it is easier for children to learn key characters and build up their sight vocabulary (key words) and phonics knowledge. The disadvantage is that children are not experiencing 'real' books. To overcome this, we have made some further changes to the way we teach reading (see below). There is a new level for the end of Key Stage 1 (white star) which enables children to deepen their learning before moving up through the rest of the colours in Key Stage 2.
- ✓ Books used for the teaching of reading in groups (guided reading) are more challenging and provide a greater range of reading material. By the end of Year 2 children experience reading longer books with chapters
- ✓ Children have regular exposure to high quality reading materials in school (picture books, story books, and non-fiction books)

- ✓ More of our topics are now based around a high quality text. This encourages a love of reading and provides a wealth of writing opportunities that the children enjoy. Our review of topics continues in order to ensure that high quality texts are being used throughout the school and we continue to evaluate the success of this
- ✓ In 2018/2019 our library will be fully operational so that every child who wishes to borrow a book from the new library will be able to.

### **Writing:**

In EYFS and at Key Stage 1 the focus is on learning the skills involved in writing (mark-making in EYFS, developing strength in the hands and fingers, handwriting, spelling and sentence construction and sequencing sentences into a narrative). The children practise these skills through retelling familiar stories and writing factual accounts of things that they have direct experience of such as their 'news' or a visit they have made or an experiment they have conducted. With this sound foundation in place children are then in a position to learn about the different styles of writing from Year 3 onwards.

### **Maths:**

Our maths teaching is firmly rooted in the pedagogy of how children learn best in maths. We follow a step by step approach that supports the hierarchy of learning and resources to improve visual memory are provided at each step. This is important because having a good visual memory is a key component in becoming competent and confident in maths. Working in this way also helps develop independence so children are less reliant on adults. Resources are also sent home with any calculation homework so that parents know how methods are taught in school and so that they can help their children with this.

### **Being safe:**

We believe it is a basic entitlement for a child to know how to keep themselves safe. Examples of how we teach this are: a visit to Hazard Alley as part of the Year 2 topic, 'It's an emergency', road safety in 'Footsteps' training in Year 2 and First Aid in Year 6 and internet safety in Key Stage 2. In 2018/2019 we are looking for further ways of doing this through the use of outside agencies delivering some of these programmes for us.

### **Other aspects of the curriculum:**

- ✓ We have reviewed our after school clubs and now have a greater variety of clubs for all age ranges (except Reception). Within any one year our aim is that every child who wishes to attend an after school club, can. For 2018/2019 we are undertaking a further survey of what our pupils would like to see on offer.