

CURRICULUM SUBJECT STATEMENTS 2015 - 2016

The Early Years Foundation Stage

Teaching and Learning in the EYFS (Reception Class) are based on the four principles in the current government framework for the EYFS:

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and Developing

The three specific and four prime areas of learning in the curriculum are delivered through planned, purposeful play with a good balance of child initiated and adult led activities both in and outdoors.

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely, encouraging each child to flourish and reach their full potential.

Mathematics

The maths curriculum is delivered based on the new Primary National Curriculum (2014) and the framework for EYFS.

We aim to provide all pupils with some significant direct teaching every school day which is oral, interactive, fun and stimulating. The variety of teaching styles and lessons structures used provide opportunities for pupils to consolidate their previous learning, use and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills, pose and ask questions and investigate mathematical ideas and solve problems.

Each year group has a number of key number facts to learn with the aim of developing instant mental recall. These then give a foundation of facility with number to support learning in maths as children move through the curriculum for each year group.

Children are encouraged to reflect on their own learning and apply maths knowledge and skills in a real life context, in other lessons and, where possible, beyond the confines of the traditional classroom.

English

It is our aim at St Mark's to develop children's abilities to become competent, confident and effective communicators in English. We achieve this through the specific teaching of the key strands of:

- Reading
- Writing
- Grammar and Punctuation
- Speaking and listening
- Spelling (including synthetic phonics)
- Handwriting

We aim to inspire children to read with deep understanding for both pleasure and the acquisition of knowledge and to value our literary heritage. We strive to create a genuine love of language and enjoyment of the process of reading.

In the teaching of writing children are encouraged to produce work of a high standard taking care with grammar, spelling, punctuation and handwriting. The emphasis is on clear and relevant communication of ideas with a sense of audience and a control of language.

In order to encourage the use of whole texts in the teaching of literacy we subscribe to the Power of Reading, a set of resources providing cross curricular resource materials for teaching good quality literature as whole texts from Reception to Year 6.

Speaking and listening skills are developed in part through drama and role play. We encourage creativity, discussion, empathy with the ideas and opinions of others, positive listening and clarity of speech. These skills should begin to equip children for lifelong learning and effective functioning in a diverse and challenging modern world.

Each class has a daily Literacy lesson with a strong emphasis on the further development of skills in the context of learning in other areas of the curriculum. Beyond the literacy lessons there are daily reading sessions (for individual, whole class, paired or group guided reading or spelling related activities). Children also have short daily phonics or spelling sessions, some in mixed age ability groups.

Science

Our science curriculum is based on the current EYFS Framework and the new Primary National Curriculum (2014) with an aim to ensure continuity and progression from Reception to Year 6. We aim to develop the children's scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding in biology, chemistry and physics. We place a strong emphasis on working scientifically and use an enquiry based approach to ensure that children develop rigorous scientific skills while learning more about the world around them. We teach about the lives and achievements of important scientists and aim to help the children understand the possible uses and applications of science today and in the future. Above all we endeavour to make learning science practical, exciting and fun !

History

In the teaching of History through an enquiry based approach we aim to foster in children genuine curiosity and along lasting interest in the past. We work to enable them to understand the details of significant events and to ask and research questions about how and why the world has changed over time. We try to develop inquiring minds that ask questions about different beliefs and cultures and the ways in which they have shaped the development of our country. Through study of the past we hope that children will learn more about themselves as individuals and members of society in modern Britain.

Geography

At St Mark's Geography, like History, is an enquiry based subject designed to inspire curiosity, awe and wonder. Geography offers our children a chance to investigate the world around them and gain an understanding of the people with whom they share it. Units of study allow children to:

- discover and explore patterns and processes
- ask why things are as they are
- consider how places have changed
- consider how places might continue to change
- begin to understand their own roles and place in in the modern world as global citizens

We believe strongly that learning in Geography should be real and relevant and as a result much of our teaching has a link to our local area. The children have the opportunity to enjoy learning outside, developing field work skills and learning through hands on experience. This learning is recorded in a variety of ways and may be supported through work in other areas of the curriculum.

The curriculum for Geography offers ample opportunity for progression with the scope of places studied extending from the local area to the wider region, the country in which they live and the wider world.

We are currently developing the idea of global learning across the curriculum to provide a wider context for children's understanding of the world and the interconnectedness of all human activity.

Art

Children experience many opportunities to develop their understanding, knowledge, skill and appreciation of art, craft and design. They explore a variety of tools, media and techniques to create sculptures, drawings, paintings, collages, prints and textiles. Children are encouraged to express their ideas and feelings using these skills and techniques, even in other areas of the curriculum. Over time they will have looked closely at and responded to the work of a large range of artists local, past and present.

Each week there is a chosen piece of art that is displayed in the hall during collective worship as well as in each classroom. A short introduction to the artist and their work is given in the whole school assembly at the beginning of each week.

Design Technology (DT)

Work in Design Technology provides children with the opportunity to experience a range of natural and man-made materials. It develops a child's physical manipulative, creative and critical skills.

At Key Stage 1 children are encouraged to design and make models using reclaimed Materials, food and textiles. Projects include making pop up books, moving toys, model houses and real pizzas.

At Key Stage 2 greater emphasis is placed on design and the evaluation of a finished product. Typical projects include: making vehicles with a motor, designing and making a pair of slippers, making card photo frames and bread-making.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship

Through the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum we aim to provide children the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active, responsible citizens. We take a whole school approach to PSHE and Citizenship reflected in our promotion of good health throughout the school and our carefully planned health curriculum with links to other subjects, particularly RE and Science.

We work along half termly Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) themes. Where relevant our schemes of work include aspects of Sex and Relationships, Drug and Alcohol Education and Citizenship as identified within non-statutory government guidance. We enhance our provision through visits from the Life Education Mobile Classroom and a programme of education in Year 3 known as Kidsafe. E-Safety is supported with annual Kendal wide schools refresher training for staff and a series of government sponsored projects completed in each class.

Children learn about the process of western democracy with annual elections for House Captains and School Council representatives. The School Council meets regularly to share issues from class council meetings and to consider ideas for development of aspects of the school environment and school life. Members of the St Mark's School Council meet termly as part of the Kendal-wide 'Cool Council' run for primary schools by older children from the local secondary schools.

Each year we invite our local Member of Parliament to meet with the School Council to explain the importance of representation and how it works in the UK parliamentary system. We take the whole School Council to London to visit the Houses of Parliament and witness the structure and process of UK government.

Our emphasis on the chosen 15 Christian values coupled with our open, inclusive ethos helps to ensure a balanced and tolerant approach to people from minority cultures. We welcome children of the Christian faith, other faiths and no faiths into school as pupils with no discrimination. Racist incidents and use of pejorative language are challenged and recorded. They are very rare in deed.

Religious Education (RE)

RE is an essential subject at the core of all learning in school in that it encourages children to consider what it means to be human. By building on the school-wide development of the spiritual elements of life, RE takes children on a journey into the ways in which people have sought to answer the big philosophical questions at the heart of our existence.

As a Church of England school our emphasis is on the teaching of Christianity as a reasonable faith with a balance of narrative, thematic and doctrinal elements. We look at two other world faiths in detail in order to make comparisons and develop deep understanding and appreciation of difference. Judaism and Islam, in teaching, heritage and as monotheistic religions, have much in common with Christianity and thematic teaching will often draw on all three with further reference to other world religions.

Our teaching in RE is based on units of work in the Carlisle Agreed Syllabus. We take an enquiry based approach to the teaching of RE, encouraging the children themselves to raise questions for discussion, with a balance between learning from and learning about religion. In all teaching we seek to provide opportunity for open dialogue and pupil self expression in response to the ideas, issues and challenges raised.

In the current climate of fear of extremism and a fragile geopolitical context we seek to provide open, honest and challenging RE built on a shared set of Christian values.

Computing

Computing was a completely new subject in the Primary National Curriculum 2014. The overarching aim is to transform children's experience with IT from simply using computers to understanding how they work and learning how to write code and simple programs.

Our emphasis is on equipping young people with the skills and knowledge they will need for living in a modern and rapidly changing world. They need a wide set of skills to enable them to function in the digital world. The new curriculum will develop both skills and knowledge through three elements: computer science, information technology and digital literacy. These strands are developed discreetly as well as through learning in other subjects where ICT is used to enhance teaching and learning.

EYFS and Key Stage 1 children have the opportunity to learn how to write and test simple programs. They will learn how computers work and how to program them to organise, manipulate and store digital content.

In Key Stage 2 children learn about computer networks (including the internet) and the services these networks are able to provide.

Throughout the children's learning an emphasis is placed on the safe use of ICT equipping children with the knowledge they need to access the digital world confidently and safely.

Physical Education (PE)

PE develops children's physical competence and confidence and their ability to use these to perform in a range of activities. It promotes skilfulness, physical development and an understanding of the 'body in action'. Children are encouraged to be creative and competitive and to face different challenges as an individual as well as in groups and teams. Children learn endurance, perseverance and resilience in the structured context of games and sports.

We help them to learn how to *lose with grace and learn from failure and making mistakes*. Interpersonal skills are developed in the context of team sports, coping with defeat and supporting team mates with compassion when mistakes are made.

PE helps to promote the habits of a healthy lifestyle. In PE lessons children also learn useful skills that have applications in other aspects of learning: planning, performing and evaluating actions and ideas and improve on quality and effectiveness.

We have carefully structured schemes of work (based on the Lancashire Scheme of Work) for skills, gymnastics, dance and games development. Each Year 6 class has the opportunity to work with trained dance specialists to choreograph an original dance piece for performance at the Kendal Brewery Arts Centre's annual dance festival.

All children in Key Stage 2 have a series of swimming lessons at Kendal Leisure Centre. The emphasis is on personal survival skills, based on the development of good breaststroke. Competitive swimming is also encouraged in the fielding of teams to represent the school in the annual Kendal primary schools swimming gala.

We encourage a mixture of individual skills development and competition. With the KCP family of local schools we are able to access a wide range of sports festivals and competitions. Teams from St Mark's have won local competitions in Football, Tag Rugby, Table Tennis and Swimming in recent years.

We regularly acknowledge the achievements of individual children who pursue sports out of school time by re-awarding cups, medals and certificates in our weekly celebration assembly.