



St. David's School

Curriculum Policy Statement

General

In general terms all education aims to broaden the life chances of pupils and enrich their quality of life, by helping them to become ultimately independent learners. The curriculum is all the planned activities that we organise in order to promote learning and personal growth and development. It includes not only the more 'formal' teaching time activities within the weekly timetable at whatever level of learning (Early Years/Junior School) but also the range of extra-curricular activities that the school organises in order to enrich the experiences of the children. It also includes the 'hidden curriculum' or what the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. We strive to achieve all the aims of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda.

School Aims and Ethos

The delivery of the curriculum will reflect the school ethos and its aims which are to:

- Value children as individuals, responding to their needs in small class groups, drawing out and developing their varied talents and potential.
- Provide a friendly, family atmosphere, conducive to learning, where courtesy, kindness and consideration for others are fostered in all pupils.
- Offer, through a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, opportunities, encouragement and guidance for pupils to pursue excellence in intellectual, physical and cultural activities, whilst also developing their spiritual and moral understanding.
- Recognise and celebrate positive achievements.
- Promote a genuine partnership between pupils, parents and staff, based on mutual trust, good communication and co-operation.
- Prepare pupils for life after St. David's by helping them to acquire skills and attitudes needed to move on happily, confidently and successfully into the next stage of their education.
- Develop and support staff fully within the context of personal needs, school needs and national initiatives, by offering them respect, recognition and responsibilities, together with opportunities for new experiences.

Catering successfully and effectively for children from 3 – 11 years old is a challenging task for any school. Along with the breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum to suit all these children at different ages, there is a need for continuity and progression over the years and across the Key Stages covered from the Early Years to Key Stage 2.

The Early Years Curriculum

The School is fully committed to the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) themes and principles, which cover the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. The four themes and principles are:

- *A Unique Child:* every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- *Positive Relationships:* children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.
- *Enabling Environments:* the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.
- *Learning and Development:* children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and interconnected.

The Early Years Department, classes 3 – 4+ years old and 4 – 5+ years old, provide care and education for boys and girls. In a completely secure environment that is caring and homely, we give a very gentle and purposeful start to the formal education process. We provide a happy environment, combining purposeful play and a solid educational structure.

The main aim is to ensure the happy, all-round development of each child through a wide and balanced range of interesting and challenging experiences. Through the well defined Early Learning Goals programme they develop intellectual, linguistic, physical, creative, emotional and social skills. Children are given ample opportunities to learn through games and imaginative play, whether indoors or outdoors. Indeed, extending the classroom beyond into the outside play area and other teaching areas within the school provides a varied and wide set of learning environments for the children.

In Nursery children learn to play and work together in an organised, but happy and caring atmosphere. They experience a wide range of theme based activities include painting, drawing, sticking, manipulative and construction games.

Fun and play remain important in the Reception class, but more time is devoted to number and letter work to prepare each child for the next step in his/her education. Opportunities for more sustained work and concentration are provided, so that children have the time to further develop their skills and talents. Phonics, guided language books and practical Maths are introduced at this stage. Opportunities for learning a subject covered by specialist teachers mean that children can become involved in PE, Music, ICT work and French, at an age when modern foreign languages can be absorbed with great ease. Gradually, children learn to become more independent within an increasingly structured and slightly more formal environment.

Children are encouraged to work hard and play hard. They are rewarded and praised for giving of their best. Good behaviour is the norm and always reinforced. We believe that a positive, happy atmosphere helps instill a sense of self-discipline. Staff give children clear guidance about boundaries, rules, manners and expectations.

We work very closely with parents from the outset. After induction visits, there is a social evening before children join us and early in the Autumn Term there is a further Information Evening for parents. We encourage regular staff/parent contact on a daily basis to share relevant information. Our 'Open Door' policy allows individual pupil progress discussions at mutually convenient times. At the end of the academic year Records of Achievement are prepared for all Nursery children and passed on to their

parents for sharing with the teachers responsible for the next phase of their child's education.

For more detail about routines, expectations and procedures, all of which impact upon the curriculum and hidden curriculum as experienced by the Nursery children, please refer to the Early Years Foundation Stage booklet.

The Curriculum

St. David's Curriculum is devised from QCA guidance and also set at levels in excess of these in Maths, English and Science. The vertical Curriculum progression is set out in the Schemes of Work (copies in Staffroom) and in Year Plans which demonstrate the delivery of the Curriculum in each class. Copies of Year Plans are kept in the Staffroom and in each classroom.

All teachers are responsible for preparing and updating Year Plans which must be submitted to the Head before the beginning of the School Year.

The academic content of lessons and the teaching methods are left to the professional skills of the teacher, providing the aims of the School are met and the curriculum covered as set out in the Schemes of Work and Year Plans.

Class visits and workshops designed to support the curriculum can be arranged by Subject Teachers in conjunction with Form Teachers. Outing forms can be obtained from the Office and must be completed and returned to the School Secretary. Arrangements must be discussed with the Head before final decisions are taken and all procedures carefully followed regarding letters home, permission slips, transport and cover arrangements. A pre-outing risk assessment visit must be made. Cover will then be arranged by the Deputy Head for any staff absence.

All pupils are taught relevant skills in literacy and numeracy, together with scientific, technological, human, social, physical and ascetic skills.

Teaching staff include levels of differentiation within their planning to meet the individual needs of the child. Please see our 'Differentiation Policy' for further details.

The school curriculum closely follows the National Curriculum and appropriate medium term plans are prepared for each subject area. The foundation stage classes work towards the early learning goals.

The role of the subject leader

The role of the subject leader is to:

- Provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject;
- Support and advise colleagues on issues related to the subject;
- Monitor pupils' progress in that subject area;
- Provide efficient resource management for the subject.

The school gives subject leaders non-contact time each term, so that they can carry out their duties. It is the role of each subject leader to keep up to date with developments in their subject, at both national and local levels. They review the way in which the subject is taught in the school, and plan for improvement. This development planning links to whole-school objectives. Each subject leader reviews the curriculum plans for the subject, ensures that there is full coverage of the National Curriculum, and sees that progression is planned into schemes of work. The subject leaders are also aiming to develop assessment of childrens work.

The Junior School (Year 1 – Year 6)

Ethos and Aims

We place great emphasis on creating the right ethos for learning. Children continue to work and play hard, strive for excellence and they are encouraged and rewarded for achievements, improvement, effort and good behaviour through the House Points system. They enjoy the public recognition of good work and good behaviour being rewarded and publicly applauded.

Within a happy atmosphere, we value and develop all the skills and talents of individual pupils and staff. Staff use a broad range of teaching methods and strategies (from interactive whiteboards to 'chalk and talk') to ensure children remain focused and challenged, with the arts, sport, languages and ICT promoting 'all-round' development. Academic examinations and tests are important, but young children really need to be properly prepared for the next stage in their education. We believe in strengthening the 'whole person' with broader skills and positive attitudes.

A Wealth of Opportunities

Physical Education and Sport

Our philosophy is to physically educate all children, rather than 'coach' sports activities to the chosen few. We aim to be inclusive rather than exclusive, so that all pupils feel that they 'can' rather than that they 'can't' do sport/games! This does not mean, however, that we cannot be both participative and competitive. We want all children to 'have a go', but if we enter competitions, we strive to win! Regular involvement in enjoyable sports and games is an integral part of school life. Children are encouraged to 'play hard and play fair'. They learn the importance of regular physical exercise and how it contributes towards personal well-being and good health. Their involvement in activities which regularly raise heart rate into the training zone, means that St. David's pupils enjoy high levels of cardiovascular fitness.

A balanced programme is offered in lessons and extra-curricular clubs. This includes athletics, cross-country, football, rugby, netball, cricket, rounders, tennis, hockey, swimming, gymnastics and dance. We hold traditional Sport Days, swimming galas and cross-country events and there are regular fixtures against other schools in the main team sports.

Art & Design

Practical art allows for adventure and for trying out individual creative ideas, combining learning with having fun. Pupils are given regular opportunities with a wide range of art-based activities.

Music

We aim to foster a love of music in all pupils, with practical and creative work at all levels to develop music literacy and understanding. At class level, we provide music and movement, group singing and music making. The Junior Choir and Orchestra, musical productions at Christmas and class assemblies provide a wealth of further opportunities to develop musical interest and perform in public. Peripatetic music staff provide individual tuition in all the main instruments.

All children prepare assemblies and are involved in a Christmas production, while older pupils learn the skills of improvisation, mime, dance and public speaking. There is a weekly musical theatre group and Junior Choir.

In the curriculum, dance is offered as part of the PE programme of activities.

Educational Visits and Responsibilities

There are regular class outings to museums, study centre, theatres and historical/geographical places of interest. Theatre companies and musical ensembles also visit us in school. All these experiences in and out of school help prepare pupils for Senior School life.

Additionally, Year 6 pupils, as the oldest pupils in the School, assume prefecting responsibilities, which help them to develop their self-confidence, self-esteem and consideration of the well-being of others.

The Curriculum Experience for the Early Years

There is generally one small class per year with a maximum of 18 in Nursery and 22 in Reception. The curriculum is taught by trained class teachers, supported by Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). The class teacher will deliver the lion's share of the curriculum (numeracy, literacy, topic work etc). However, additionally some specialist teachers are used to deliver subjects such as: PE/Sport, Music, ICT, French and some Science. In a non-subject specific context, emphasis is also placed on engendering enthusiasm and curiosity. Children are encouraged to develop tolerance, patience and kindness towards each other and they are introduced to other countries, cultures and creeds.

Key Stage 1 pupils have a longer lunchtime than Key Stage 2 pupils. They finish morning school at 12 noon and go to the first lunch sitting, eating their lunch with their class teachers, who can ensure that food is eaten sensibly and table manners are not forgotten! In the remaining hour for lunch, pupils may be involved in free play in different areas of the playgrounds.

There is more room for 'curriculum independence' in the Reception Class, as the curriculum is largely dictated by the Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCFS), as many parents are in receipt, during part of this year, of the Early Years Grant.

From Year 1 upwards in the whole school, the school is under no obligation to follow the National Curriculum. However, like most accredited independent schools, our schemes of work do largely reflect National Curriculum material. However, we do not allow ourselves to be constrained by National Curriculum requirements.

Key Stage 1 pupils do not participate in SATs. They do however undertake a battery of standardised assessment tests that provide us with equivalent data. See Assessment Policy for further details.

Homework is set in Key Stage 1 and comprises mainly reading, spellings and some weekly Maths work. Occasionally, pupils will be asked to go away and find out about something being studied in class or to bring in different objects, as a starting point for class discussion.

During the year there are parents evenings for discussion about pupil progress with the Form Teacher, who collates all the information across the whole curriculum. At the end of the year in the Summer Term all pupils receive a full written report, covering all subjects taught on the curriculum, together with comments from the Form Tutor and the Head. In Reception, the school is obliged to complete a Foundation Stage Profile (FSP) for each pupil and data has to be forwarded to Surrey CC. This FSP is kept in school and passed on to the next class teacher in Year 1. The school uses its own in-house format of report, so that parents are kept fully informed, but in a more readable and understandable version.

The Curriculum Experience for Years 3 – 6 (Key Stage 2)

From Year 3 we run one class per year group, with up to 23 pupils per class. This is the longest Key Stage (4 years) and there is a real difference between realistic expectations in Year 3 (recently infant pupils) and Year 6 (soon to be secondary pupils).

We maintain the Form Teacher but there is an increasing use of specialist teachers who deliver the following subjects from Year 3: PE/Sport, Music, Science, ICT and French. Homework expectations also increase and from Year 3 pupils start to use a homework diary, in which they note down homework and when it is due in. There is also a broader range of homework from Year 3, so that History, Geography, Science and French can also be set where appropriate alongside the regular Maths and English, which the pupils are used to from Key Stage 1.

By Years 5/6, a large part of the curriculum is taught by specialist teachers, whose subject knowledge enables them to respond well to the more demanding needs of the older pupils. Form Teachers retain pastoral responsibilities, monitoring progress overall and reviewing it regularly with parents. The main aims by this stage are to consolidate and develop the basic work in English, Maths and Science, whilst never underestimating the importance that all the other subjects play in the overall well-being and personal development of the child.

Not only must opportunities for a very broad curriculum be offered, but achievements in all spheres must continue to be recognised and praised frequently, so that individual children's self-esteem remains high, wherever their talents may lie. In this way, children continue to want to come to school, where they feel valued, safe and enthused by the curriculum. In the right frame of mind, even children who find some core subject work challenging, tend to stay more focused and have a greater determination to try and overcome their difficulties with the help and support of their teachers and peers. The learning environment remains central to their future success and happiness. For those children aspiring to be part of competitive school sports teams, they have a chance to have team practices and inter school fixtures.

In KS2 we continue to have two parents evening a year and a full written report at the end of the Autumn Term and the Summer Term.

Key Stage 2 pupils do not participate in SATs. They do however undertake a battery of standardised assessment tests that provide us with equivalent data.

Inclusion

It is the school's belief that each child is an individual with different learning needs. Each child is on a learning continuum and he/she moves up and down it at different rates – the path of learning is NOT a smooth one! We aim to cater best for those different needs through providing small classes with LSA support and differentiated work in the classroom. Moreover, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) will also see classes once a week for support and extension lessons. With another qualified teacher, already small groups can be broken down even further and three staff (teacher, LSA and SENCO) can create appropriate groups so that children can be supported or extended as required. These groups are not 'cast in stone', but can vary according to the subject and subject material. The important aspect is to focus professional support where it is most needed at the time for the particular child. Additionally, some children may be seen separately by a Learning Support teacher at various times in the school day and they will follow an Individual Educational Plan, which is shared between the child, teachers and parent.

Transfer to Secondary School

We start detailed discussions with parents about secondary education when their child is in Year 5. We also hold an evening for Year 5 parents to meet the Heads of prospective secondary schools in both the state and independent sector. The children have to leave us at the end of Year 6 and we have a fine record of placing children in the secondary, grammar or independent schools of their choice. Subjects covered include Maths and Verbal Reasoning and English (composition and comprehension), as well as interview techniques where necessary. The school provides detailed transfer reports and the Head remains in contact with the school admissions staff.

Policy written by J Mitchell Dec 2011

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