

ST SWITHUN'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM STATEMENT 2016-2017

At St Swithun's, our school curriculum follows all the requirements of the National Curriculum, but we are proud to offer a much broader curriculum than that, making the most of many and varied opportunities to extend and enrich the curriculum for our children. We aim to be innovative in our practice to provide contextualised, stimulating learning opportunities which allow all our children to succeed. Our skills-based creative curriculum is broad, balanced and inspiring, providing first-hand experiences and building on children's prior knowledge. We plan and deliver our curriculum in such a way as to meet our school aims and to suit the needs of our pupils, whatever their starting points. This enables them to develop as enquiring, creative, thoughtful, stimulated and independent learners.

The curriculum at St Swithun's aims to:

- inspire and engage children so that they develop a love of learning;
- embed key skills to prepare children for further learning, developing their sense of responsibility as future citizens;
- take learning beyond the classroom, using the many rich resources that Oxford, our local area and our community have to offer;
- develop children to become reflective learners who have a sense of responsibility for their own learning and development;
- develop children's understanding of, and commitment to, the importance of perseverance and resilience in order to achieve their potential;
- enable children to use their acquired skills and knowledge to communicate, explore, observe and challenge;
- enable children to make a positive contribution to the school and wider communities;
- encourage children to be tolerant, to value others, their views, cultures and beliefs.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."
(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2012)

At St Swithun's, we believe that children in the EYFS need to experience a wide variety of first-hand, practical learning opportunities to enable them to develop to their full potential. We aim to provide a secure, enjoyable and caring educational environment where each and every child feels valued. Our Nursery and Reception classes work in partnership as one Early Years unit. This ensures children that children from our Nursery class who join our Reception class are to able build on skills already developed. They are also able to follow similar routines that provide for their needs and with which they feel safe and confident throughout their Early Years, in preparation for their future years in school.

Through a rich, stimulating and challenging environment, both inside and outside, we promote the Characteristics of Effective Learning. These are the skills and attitudes that children need to develop to become life-long learners. We encourage children to problem solve, think critically, persevere and have a 'can do' attitude.

We pride ourselves in having high expectations of the children in their behaviour and in the development of skills and attitudes. We provide creative opportunities in performing, storytelling, mark-making, singing and music making regularly and enhance the curriculum with visitors in school and visits further afield.

Our EYFS curriculum promotes, supports and fosters in our children the development of their:

- personal, social and emotional skills
- understanding of language, speaking and listening;
- ability to concentrate;

- physical abilities and self-care skills
- mathematical skills;
- reading and writing skills
- understanding of the world;
- expressive arts and design skills

These encompass the Early Learning Goals set out by the Department for Education.

As they enter Year 1, children can still be working on the Early Learning Goals of the EYFS curriculum. There is a period in the autumn term when the majority of children have progressed onto the National Curriculum.

Years 1 to 6

For children in Years 1 to 6, the National Curriculum provides us with the outline of knowledge, skills and understanding that we are required to cover in school. We choose to teach much of this through creative, cross-curricular themes, through which children will learn different strands of the curriculum from a range of subjects, all within one common theme (our 'topics') for a number of weeks – often for a term - although the length of topics does vary. When there is commonality between subjects and our topics, learning is linked and lessons are taught using this cross-curricular approach. However, we do not make contrived links, so where this is not achievable, subjects are taught discretely.

As well as developing the children's knowledge, central to our curriculum is the development of their skills: not only for all the statutory subject areas such as maths, English, PE, science, computing, history, music etc, but also generic life skills, such as problem solving, social skills and being able to work independently, co-operatively and collaboratively. We place a strong emphasis on the development of personal skills.

The National Curriculum comprises core and foundation subjects. The three core subjects are English, mathematics and science and these take up a larger share of curriculum teaching time. The foundation subjects are: art and design, computing, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. A foreign language is also taught in Key Stage 2. At St Swithun's all children learn French in Years 3 to 6. The main curriculum is extended with other aspects of learning, including personal, social and health education. In addition, religious education for all year groups follows the Oxfordshire agreed syllabus.

As a Church of England school, everything we do is underpinned by Christian values. These are taught on their own and through other areas of the curriculum, including collective worship. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils and their understanding of the core values of our society – our British Values - are woven through the curriculum.

Please read on to find out more details about each subject that forms part of the National Curriculum and how we teach it.

Core subjects

English:

At St. Swithun's we use language to build our views of our community and the world. We believe that developing a love of our language in our children is vital in achieving success at school and later in life. The exploration and enjoyment of the English language is our priority and we value all its aspects – speaking, listening, reading and writing. English is taught daily across the whole school with work appropriately differentiated to match all abilities. Talking is fundamental to learning. Pupils are encouraged to speak clearly, confidently and with expression in order to convey their ideas and opinions. Just as important is the need to listen carefully to others and respond appropriately. Pupils are given opportunities in all areas of the curriculum to develop their speaking and listening skills, in paired, group or whole class situations.

Guided Reading, which is taught as part of Read, Write Inc in Key Stages 1 and discretely in Key Stage 2, is an important part of our curriculum. Children work in focused groups to develop their reading skills and their understanding of texts. We provide children with rich reading experiences within English lessons and encourage them to appreciate the author's use of language and writing techniques in order to develop their own writing skills. As they go through the school, they are given more responsibility for making their own reading choices. Class libraries are open throughout the day for children to choose their books. Children's writing is developed across the curriculum so that they are learning to write for a range of purposes.

VCOP skills (vocabulary, conjunctions, openers and punctuation) and the 'Big Write' are used as means of developing opportunity and structure for children to do their own sustained piece of writing. We aim for children to develop as independent writers. We encourage them to write clearly and with confidence in any given genre. We teach them to use punctuation and grammar accurately, to be able to proofread their own work and make amendments and improvements. Handwriting is practised regularly and is an opportunity to develop spelling and grammar skills. Grammar is mostly taught in context, using texts as a stimulus and to provide examples.

We are very successfully using *Read, Write Inc.* as our phonics programme for Early Years and Key Stage 1 children, and in Key Stage 2 as a catch-up programme. It enables every child to become a confident and fluent reader at the first attempt as the books have been specially written to match the sounds of which the children already have a secure knowledge. Each child who completes Read Write Inc. learns to read fluently and confidently, a skill that we all know opens the door to learning. The teaching of grammar, spelling and punctuation are mapped across the school as a follow on from phonics – and are detailed on our whole school skills-based curriculum plans. Spelling is taught daily from Year 2 to Year 6 using the *Read, Write Inc. Spelling* programme.

Maths:

During the Early Years of nursery and reception, maths forms part of many interactive learning experiences. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of mathematics through play, exploration and discussion. Children work with shapes and begin to learn their properties, use language to give positional clues and compare quantities, identify and recreate patterns. They learn to count, read and order numbers to 20 and beyond using songs and rhymes.

In Key Stages 1 and 2 we have adopted a mastery approach in the learning and teaching of mathematics. We use *Inspire Maths* which provides a highly scaffolded learning framework with problem solving at its heart. It is built on a focused, coherent and cumulative spiral curriculum that continuously builds and consolidates knowledge to reach deep understanding. The programme encourages extensive practise to develop fluency and mastery, so that every child – across all abilities – can succeed at mathematics.

Inspire Maths emphasises the development of critical thinking and problem solving skills which can help children make connections to develop deeper understanding. The powerful concrete-pictorial-abstract (CPA) approach, including the bar model method, is central to this.

In Key Stage 1 children develop their confidence and fluency with place value and number and learn by heart key number facts such as times-tables and number bonds. They also learn to add, subtract, multiply and divide using both informal and then formal written methods. Pupils also develop skills in measurement, geometry and position and direction. Throughout, the children are encouraged to reason mathematically, so that they can explain their mathematical thinking and solve problems.

In Key Stage 2 these skills are further developed through applying their knowledge of number, deriving division facts from times-tables, working out connected number facts. Children develop their understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages, statistics, ratio and proportion and algebra. Their mathematical reasoning skills also continue to be developed so that they can follow a line of enquiry, provide generalisations and proof around their investigation. The children solve a range of problems, selecting specific skills or operations, breaking down increasingly complex problems into a series of smaller steps.

Science:

Science is taught each week, following the curriculum set out in the school's skills-based curriculum so that we cover the whole science National Curriculum. First-hand practical experience is paramount as is the teaching of key scientific skills. Children are encouraged to be independent and collaborative scientific investigators by their involvement in practical investigations. Children are encouraged to be systematic and make learning more relevant to them by designing their own experiments.

In science pupils observe, explore and ask questions about living things, materials and physical processes. They evaluate evidence and consider whether tests or comparisons are fair. They use reference materials to find out more about scientific ideas. They share their ideas and communicate them using scientific language, drawings, charts and tables.

Foundation Subjects**Art and Design**

We teach art through our topic-based curriculum. Art for most children is a natural form of expression and a source of great pleasure. We aim to increase confidence and competence in the use of different media, such as pencil, charcoal, paint, collage, inks, textiles and clay. We promote the necessary skills for our children to develop their natural ability to be expressive and creative and we aim to instil pride by achieving finished work that is of a high standard. The teaching of art skills is sometimes 'blocked' into themed weeks.

Computing

We aim for the children to be able to use and apply information technology skills confidently and independently, to support and extend their learning. We develop a culture where the use of computing becomes second nature to our pupils, thus ensuring they are ready and able to embrace the technological advances of the future. We therefore see computing as embedded into teaching across the school. Computing skills are taught through skills-based lessons and applied across a range of subject areas. Children are also given the opportunity to apply their skills in a broad range of contexts. Children have access to subscription websites such as 'MyMaths'. Across the school children are taught to use technology safely. They are taught where to go for help and support if they have concerns about content or contact on the internet or other online technologies.

During Key Stage 1, children are taught to understand what algorithms are and how they are implemented as programs on digital devices. They are taught to create and debug simple programs and to use logical reasoning to predict the behaviour of simple programs.

During Key Stage 2, children are taught to design, write and debug programs that accomplish specific goals, including controlling or simulating physical systems, using programs such as 'Scratch'. Children are taught to use logical reasoning to explain how some simple algorithms work and to detect and correct errors in algorithms and programs. They are taught about computer networks, including the internet, and the opportunities they offer for communication and collaboration. Children are taught to use search technologies effectively, appreciate how results are selected and ranked, and be discerning in evaluating digital content.

Design and Technology

Design and Technology provides our children with an opportunity to tackle problems of a practical nature. The cross curricular nature of Design and Technology offers a setting for the children to apply knowledge and skills from a number of other subjects including art, language, maths and science. Design skills are developed by investigating real objects and making skills by the use of tools to make artefacts to solve practical problems. All children have the opportunity to develop cooking skills, with an emphasis on healthy eating. Children learn independently and in groups, learning to co-operate, plan, design and make and evaluate their work. They learn to make their own decisions with help and encouragement. The teaching of design and technology is often 'blocked' into themed weeks.

Geography:

Geography develops children's knowledge and understanding of people and places. At St. Swithun's, we learn about the wider world as well as local areas, looking at the physical, social and economic issues surrounding each case study. Use of maps, atlases, photos and the internet ensures a well-balanced and interactive method of learning for all pupils. There are many cross-curricular links with subjects such as literacy, numeracy and computing. In the Foundation Stage, children learn about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects and materials. They are able to discuss their own immediate environment and understand how environments may vary from one to another. During Key Stages 1 and 2, children explore physical and human differences in the world around them. They learn about the skills needed to ask geographical questions about a locality in the UK compared to a locality in a less economically developed country. Children are taught how settlements differ and change and they understand environmental issues linked to these. They also learn about water and its effect on landscapes such as rivers and coasts. They are taught differences in weather and the effect of climate change.

History:

At St Swithun's we see the teaching of history, as an opportunity to develop skills of enquiry and questioning: to become open minded "historical detectives" and explore the past in an exciting way. We aim to provide first hand experiences with role play, class visits, workshops and visiting experts playing an important part in all our topics. History is taught through our cross curricular topics. The past comes to life when children use a variety of sources of information to find clues and evidence and take part in discussions with their peers. Through History, children learn to make comparisons and links between the past and modern times and discover how and why things have changed. They learn about people and events in the past, in Britain and the wider world, and realise that these have influenced our lives today. Children are taught how to investigate and record their findings in interesting and creative ways including writing, art, drama and computing.

Languages:

Learning a foreign language provides a valuable educational, social and cultural experience in preparation for future life. We teach French from Year 3 to Year 6 starting with singing along to songs and joining in with games. The children enjoy "playing with language" and use it in a range of situations. The older children learn to speak and write in full sentences in French, in response to cross curricular topics and activities. We use the 'La Jolie Ronde' scheme of work.

Physical Education:

We provide two sessions of PE per week to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum. One session each week is led by qualified sports coaches, whilst the class teacher takes the second session. Each class is taught games, dance and gymnastics. Key Stage 2 children are also taught athletics, outdoor and adventurous activities and swimming. An annual inter-house sports day allows children to enjoy sharing their skills with parents. There are further opportunities for participation in competitions in a football, netball, hockey, tennis, swimming and athletics within our partnership schools and further afield. We are aiming to develop more inter-house competitions.

The children have access to several extra-curricular clubs including football, gymnastics, rounders and Zumba.

Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship:

At St Swithun's, children are taught to understand and respect the importance of religious beliefs to many people in the world around them. We encourage children to use and develop their skills in RE and to participate in critical thinking. Religious education is taught through our topic approach as well as in separate RE lessons. Each year the children will visit a place of worship relevant to the religions they are studying.

There is a daily act of collective worship for each child, sometimes as a whole school or in a smaller group. This is an important feature of school life, and a positive focus of its ethos and values. Collective worship is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian nature. Parents also retain the right to withdraw their children from collective worship by prior arrangement with the Headteacher.

Our close relationship with St Swithun's Church provides children with another regular link to the Christian faith. Pupils are involved in various services at the church throughout the year and church members actively contribute to worship at the school.

Music

There are three main strands to music – singing, listening and playing. Children are taught a wide repertoire of songs appropriate to their age group. These include hymns, traditional songs from other lands and cultures and songs from former times as well as modern songs. Children are encouraged to develop an awareness of the different effects of instruments used in music, as well as to give a thoughtful and sensitive response to recorded music. Each child takes part in a musical performance every year. Children are taught how to play pitched and un-pitched percussion instruments. They are taught to recognise and discriminate between the various elements of music such as pitch and rhythm. We have access to music specialists who take small groups of children learning to play instruments such as recorders, violin, keyboards and clarinet. The pupils and parents of the St Swithun's School Band play together each week and perform regularly in school concerts, as does the school's choir, 'Singing Squad'.

PSHE

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) we follow the *Jigsaw* scheme of work, which is a carefully planned programme of learning opportunities and experiences that enable children to grow and develop as individuals and as valuable members of families and of social and economic communities. PSHE education provides children and young people with knowledge, understanding, attitudes and practical skills to live healthy, safe, productive, fulfilled, capable and responsible lives. It inspires them to be enterprising and supports them in making effective transitions, positive learning and career choices and in managing their finances effectively. It gives children and young people the skills to reflect on and analyse their own values and equips them to face difficult and sometimes conflicting attitudes they may face in the future. Opportunities for learning in PSHE are split into key areas they are: Being Me in My World, Celebrating Difference, Dreams and Goals, Healthy Me, Relationships and Changing Me. Sex and Relationships Education is taught at an age-appropriate level throughout the school.

We actively promote some areas of the wider curriculum, in particular sport, music, drama and outdoor education.

We offer a wide range of sporting opportunities, particularly for our older children. Even though St Swithun's is a large school, many children get an opportunity to represent the school in competitive sport at some point and some of our teams have proved to be very successful.

We also offer a good range of music and drama opportunities. All children take part in the production of a musical play each year and there have been many excellent performances over the years. We often run extra-curricular theatre clubs for both Key Stages 1 and 2. Many children from Year 3 upwards learn to play an instrument and we have a thriving band.

Outdoor education is a strength at St Swithun's. Children in our Reception classes visit the local woods each week for an afternoon of outdoor learning. Children in Years 2, 4 and 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. A local, one-night visit for Year 2 is followed by five-day visits in Years 4 and 6. These visits are often a highlight of their time at St Swithun's for our children.

Active Mentoring:

Our Active Mentoring system brings together many of our school systems together in one place. It is a focussed, child centred, collaborative approach based on a dialogue about the child's present and future learning needs. It is centred on a guaranteed, evidence-based, regular, one to one dialogue between pupil and mentor.

Progress towards long term targets, in maths, writing and reading, is reviewed as well as the achievement of medium term targets. Further meaningful medium term targets are agreed. These targets transfer to pupils' personal mentoring files and form the focus of continual assessment, marking, feedback and support.

Teachers act as mentors to the children in their class and each child has a mentoring meeting at least three times each year. Teaching assistants provide additional mentoring sessions for those receiving support and intervention. Because mentoring meetings focus on achievement and attitude as well as attainment they can be used to celebrate and encourage the progress and effort of those who may still fall short of age-related expectations. Mentoring meetings also challenge children to 'be the best that they can be' and achieve their full potential.

Equal Opportunities

The school ethos recognises that equal opportunities encompass gender, nationality, ethnicity, culture, disability, age, sexuality, religion and special educational needs. Children are all treated fairly and are given equal opportunity to take part in activities across the whole curriculum. Equality is an important part of the planning and teaching of all lessons. We have high expectations of all children and the principles of equality underpin work and life throughout the school.