

St Mary's Preparatory Department Curriculum Policy

Curriculum Statement

The main thrust of an up-to-date curriculum for the 21st century is the involvement of the children in their own learning. The richest experiences will come from their active involvement rather than from the passive acceptance of having something given to them. Their progress is discussed with them by seeking their opinions of their own strengths, weaknesses, attitude and effort. Understanding of common goals and agreement between pupil, teacher and parent of future learning targets in order to raise their standard of achievement is necessary. The children, therefore, have some responsibility for their education whilst, at the same time, being given first class learning opportunities and support from their teachers and their parents.

In acknowledgement of the special requirements of children of different ages and stages, the primary phase of education has been divided into specialised areas as follows;

The Foundation Stage

The Foundation Stage starts at 3 years and finishes at the end of Reception when the child has reached 5 years. The curriculum for the foundation stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- Personal, social and emotional well-being
- Positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning
- Social skills: Attention skills and persistence
- Language and communication
- Reading and writing
- Mathematics
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Creative development

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

- Key Stage 1 refers to Years 1 and 2
- Key Stage 2 refers to Years 3, 4, 5 and 6
- The National curriculum is followed in the Preparatory Department, although, as an independent school, we can and do choose to cover extra work and activities. It is important that the National Curriculum work of Key Stages 1, 2, and 3 preceding GCSE be covered fully.
- We use Standard Assessment Tests in Years 3-6 which are a reliable indicator of progress.

The Structure of the National Curriculum

For each subject and for each key stage, programmes of study set out what pupils should be taught, and attainment targets set out the expected standards of pupils' performance. Each attainment target in each subject is divided into level description, which describes the types and range of performance that pupils working at that level should characteristically demonstrate.

In Key Stage 1 (Year 1-2) pupils are expected to work within the range of levels 1-3.

In Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6) pupils are expected to work within the range of levels 2-5.

Promoting Key Skills across the Curriculum

At all key stages pupils learn, practise, combine, develop and refine a wide range of skills in their work across the curriculum. Six skill areas are described as **key skills** because they help learners to improve their learning and performance in education, work and life. These key skills are embedded in the National Curriculum.

1. Communication

The key skill of communication includes skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Opportunities for developing this key skill are provided through English in particular and through pupils' use of language across the curriculum.

2. Application of number

The key skill of application of number includes developing a range of mental calculation skills and the ability to apply them within a variety of contexts. Opportunities for developing this key skill are provided explicitly in Mathematics.

3. Information Technology

The key skill of information technology includes the ability to use a range of information sources and ICT tools to find, analyse, interpret, evaluate and present information for a range of purposes. Opportunities for developing this key skill are provided explicitly through the subject of ICT and through pupils' use of ICT across the curriculum.

4. Working with others

The key skill of working with others includes the ability to contribute to small-group and whole class discussions and to work with others to meet a challenge. If pupils are to work with others they must develop social skills and a growing awareness and understanding of others' needs. All subjects provide opportunities for pupils to co-operate and work effectively with others in formal and informal settings, to appreciate the experience of others and consider different perspectives, and to benefit from what others think, say and do.

5. Improving Own Learning and Performance

The key skill of improving their own learning and performance involves pupils reflecting on and critically evaluating their work and what they have learnt, and identifying ways to improve their learning and performance. They need to be able to identify the purposes of learning, to reflect on the process of learning and plan

ways to improve learning. All subjects provide opportunities for pupils to review their work and discuss ways to improve their learning.

6. Problem Solving

The key skill of problem solving involves pupils developing the skills and strategies that will help them to solve the problems they face in learning and in life. Problem solving includes the skills of identifying and understanding a problem, planning ways to solve a problem, monitoring progress in tackling a problem and reviewing solutions to problems. All subjects provide pupils with opportunities to respond to the challenge of problems and to plan, test, modify and review the progress needed to achieve particular outcomes.

7. Promoting Thinking Skills

By using thinking skills pupils can focus on “knowing how” as well as “knowing what” to learn. The following thinking skills complement the key skills and are embedded in the National Curriculum.

8. Information Processing Skills

These enable pupils to locate and collect relevant information, to sort, classify, sequence, compare and contrast, and to analyse part/whole relationships.

9. Reasoning Skills

These enable pupils to give reasons for opinions and actions, to draw inferences and make deductions, to use precise language to explain what they think, and to make judgements and decisions informed by reasons and evidence.

10. Enquiry Skills

These enable pupils to ask relevant questions, to pose and define problems, to plan what to do and how to research, to predict outcomes and anticipate consequences, and to test conclusions and improve ideas.

11. Creative Thinking Skills

These enable pupils to generate and extend ideas, to suggest hypotheses, to apply imagination, and to look for alternative innovative outcomes.

12. Evaluation Skills

These enable pupils to evaluate information, to judge the value of what they read, hear or do, to develop criteria for judging the value of their own and others’ work or ideas, and to have confidence in their judgements.

Reviewed by	Susan Cookson – January 2009
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