

St Thomas CE (VC) Primary School



Curriculum Policy

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Statement of intent

At St Thomas CE VC Primary School, we value pupils' education and aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that is accessible to all. We do not tolerate discrimination of any kind, and our curriculum celebrates the diverse nature of our society, enabling pupils to embrace the world around them, and encourages adherence to the fundamental British values. It also promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at our school and of society.

This policy outlines our dedication to establishing a well-rounded and robust curriculum, as well as the provisions surrounding its creation.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2002
- Children Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE (2013) 'The national curriculum in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- SEND Policy

- Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy
- All subject policies
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- EYFS Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Approving this policy.
- Liaising with the headteacher, subject leaders and teachers with regards to pupil progress and attainment.
- Formulating a curriculum committee who assists the school with the creation and implementation of the curriculum.
- Ensuring the curriculum is inclusive and accessible to all.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Devising long- and medium-term plans for the curriculum in collaboration with teachers and other members of the SLT.
- Communicating the agreed curriculum to the governing board on an annual basis.
- Ensuring the curriculum is inclusive and accessible to all.
- Assisting teachers with the planning and implementation of the curriculum, ensuring their workload is manageable.
- Ensuring the curriculum is implemented consistently throughout the school and ensuring any difficulties are addressed and mitigated as soon as possible.
- Receiving reports on the progress and attainment of pupils and reporting these results to the governing board.
- Making any necessary adjustments to the curriculum where required.
- Keeping up-to-date with any relevant statutory updates and acting where required.
- Creating and maintaining an up-to-date curriculum intent statement.
- Ensuring the curriculum is created in accordance with this policy.
- Updating and maintaining this policy.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Implementing this policy consistently throughout their practices.
- Ensuring lesson plans are reflective of the school's curriculum.

- Implementing the curriculum in creative ways, appealing to different learning types and keeping pupils engaged in content.
- Creating short-term plans for the curriculum with fellow colleagues and reporting these plans to the headteacher.
- Creating weekly lesson plans in collaboration with colleagues and sharing these with the SLT where required.
- Collaborating with the headteacher and the SENCO to ensure that the curriculum is inclusive and accessible to all.
- Working closely with the SENCO and TAs to ensure those in need receive additional support in lessons.
- Ensuring academically more able pupils are given additional, more challenging work to celebrate their talents.
- Celebrating all pupils' academic achievements.
- Reporting progress of pupils with SEND to the SENCO and ensuring any difficulties identified are discussed and resolved.
- Monitoring the progress of all pupils and reporting on this to the headteacher.
- Working to close the attainment gap between academically more and less able pupils.

Subject leaders are responsible for:

- Providing strategic leadership and direction to their team.
- Supporting and offering advice to colleagues on issues relating to the subject or curriculum area.
- Monitoring pupil progress within the department and reporting on this to the headteacher.
- Providing efficient resource management for their department.
- Ensuring the curriculum is inclusive and accessible to all.
- Ensuring there are specialist resources and equipment available for pupils in need so that everyone can have full access to the curriculum.

The SENDCO is responsible for:

- Collaborating with the headteacher to ensure the curriculum is accessible to all, and with teachers to advise and support methods of planning and preparation to support this.
- Ensuring teaching materials do not discriminate against anyone in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Carrying out SEND assessments where necessary and ensuring pupils receive the additional help they need.
- Liaising with external agencies where necessary to ensure pupils who require additional support receive it.

3. Intent

At St Thomas we have a fully sequenced and connected curriculum that spans from Reception to Year 6 that builds towards a clear end-point which helps children to know more, remember more, and do more. It enables children to build knowledge and understanding over time, while offering rich, broad, balanced and engaging content, which is ambitious for all.

It is a systematically designed curriculum that enables us to achieve the triangulation of a well-sequenced curriculum, well-structured and consistent teaching, and meaningful assessment approaches.

We want our children to develop a vast array of knowledge and skills, which they have the ability to transfer across different subjects within the curriculum. With diverse families and different levels of socio-economic status, the staff at St Thomas ensure enrichment is at the heart of the curriculum we teach. Enrichment is woven into the very fabric of our planning, teaching and assessment process in each and every subject. Our children come to school with different life experiences, which impacts on their vocabulary, reasoning and understanding throughout all key stages. We intend to provide a range of experiences to improve learning outside the classroom and to create links between learning and fun for our children.

We want the learning gained from experiences to be invaluable as to how our children develop understanding about the world in which we live and how it can help learning inside the classroom become more tangible. We want to prepare all our children for the next stages in their educational careers as well as allow them to develop their aspirations for adult life

4. School ethos and aims

At St Thomas CE VC Primary, we believe that the curriculum is a powerful tool that promotes a love of learning, a willingness to explore and a time to have fun. The ambitious and redesigned curriculum at St Thomas CE VC Primary school, is based on both the unique makeup of the school and uses the National Curriculum as a starting point for a wide and varied learning experience for our children. The curriculum aims to provide an engaging and ambitious curriculum which delivers a broad and balanced education that meets the needs of all pupils and gives them the skills, knowledge and understanding to prepare them for their future lives. We enrich it with our strong Christian Values, our promotion of British values, and every part of it supports our children being healthy, safe and happy. We are committed to developing the whole child. Our children have the opportunity to explore their own interests, be creative, to be physically active both inside and out and to be academically challenged.

We are continually reviewing and improving the very special curriculum we offer to our children. The curriculum at St Thomas is evolving according to the needs and interests of our children and community, and to the aspirations of the staff, the church and the wider context.

Values

We value the way in which all children are unique, and our curriculum promotes respect for the views of each individual child, as well as for people of other cultures. Our school itself is extremely diverse, both culturally and religiously, so we have a great starting point!

Our school distinctive Christian school vision- **‘From Tiny Seeds, Grow Mighty Trees’** underpins the journey we want our children to undertake through the curriculum. Gaining valuable knowledge and skills to grow both spiritually, morally, intellectually and physically.

Our Core school values of **‘Belong’, ‘Hope’, ‘Aspire’, ‘Believe’, ‘Love’ and ‘Thanks’** are explicitly visited throughout the school year but also allow the children to place themselves at the centre of their learning, and guide them through the curriculum, asking questions and discovering for themselves.

We place great value the importance of each person in our community. We organise our curriculum so that we promote co-operation and understanding between all members of our community, and thereby co-operation and understanding of the global community. We also use our community to enrich our curriculum.

We value the rights enjoyed by each person in our community. We respect each child in our school for who they are, and we treat each other with fairness and honesty. We aim for everyone to be successful and we provide equal opportunities throughout, to enable this.

We value our environment; we have beautiful school grounds, so through our curriculum our children learn to respect our world, and how we should care for it now and for future generations.

We value parents and work in partnership with them to support and enrich the curriculum. Parents are informed about the curriculum through our website, our noticeboards outside, through homework activities and curriculum workshops. All parents are positively encouraged to become involved.

British Values are intrinsic to our curriculum; they are included in half term plans but are also promoted on a daily basis in our hidden curriculum.

Aims and Objectives

*to promote the Christian values and teaching of our school

*to enable all children to understand they are all successful learners

*to teach children the skills and attributes to achieve

*to encourage children to develop their own personal interests

*to promote a positive attitude towards learning so our children enjoy coming to school and develop a solid base for lifelong learning

*to teach our children the core skills of English, maths and computing, across the curriculum

*to fulfil all the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

*to enable children understand how to be safe, happy and healthy, both within the Safeguarding and PREVENT agenda.

*to enable children to understand Britain's cultural heritage and acknowledge British values

*to develop in children an awareness of their own spiritual development and understand right from wrong.

*to encourage children to be active and take responsibility for their own health

*to teach children about rights and responsibilities so they can make a positive contribution to society

*to give our children an enjoyable, hands on, WOW learning experience which will encourage them to ask questions and develop their own thinking.

5. Organisation and planning

The National Curriculum is delivered using an integrated project and subject approach. We use Cornerstones Maestro Curriculum to design, deliver and manage our curriculum through projects for Geography, History, Science, Art and DT. We have carefully selected specific schemes or designed curriculums with LA support for RE, PE, PSHE/RSE, MFL, Computing and Music. The thematic project approach, with projects lasting half a term in EYFS and a term across the rest of the school, are designed to engage and inspire pupils. With the use of Cornerstones and the other schemes, links are developed to promote and deepen students building on learning across subject specialisms.

Each year group will follow 3 projects (one per term), with EYFS following 6 projects (one per half-term).

Each project has one driver subject; however, each combines at least two other subjects within the lesson sequences. These themes are planned to use the framework of the National Curriculum. When necessary, this approach is supplemented by discrete lessons to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum.

Engage, Develop, Innovate, Express

The Four Cornerstones of Learning provides the structure for every ILP. We call these Engage, Develop, Innovate, and Express. We believe this pedagogy reflects the best way children learn and is rooted in a variety of different educational approaches and research.

Put simply, the four stages are as follows:

- **Engage** – hook children in with a memorable experience.
- **Develop** – allow children time to gather the skills and knowledge they need to develop a deep understanding.
- **Innovate** – offer creative experiences that allow children to apply their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- **Express** – provide the space and time for reflecting, evaluating, and celebrating learning.



The St Thomas CE VC Primary Curriculum (supported by Cornerstones and other specialist schemes) ensure that our children:

- learn within a coherent and progressive framework
- see clear links between different aspects of their learning
- understand the purpose and value of their learning and see its relevance to their past, present and future
- experience the challenge and enjoyment of learning develop new skills through a variety of interesting contexts
- develop and demonstrate their creativity

- develop a rich and deep subject knowledge
- explore the breadth and depth of the national curriculum

National Curriculum objectives are used as a basis to ensure coverage and progression throughout the school. The more able are challenged further in their learning and children who find aspects of their learning more difficult are appropriately supported so that they too are enabled to experience success.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils and their understanding of the core values of our society are woven through the curriculum. We aim to provide an aspirational academic environment, which supports pupils to make sustained progress from EYFS to 6. We aim for our St Thomas children to succeed in life and to be happy and fulfilled; we want our children to be successful individuals who enjoy learning, make good progress and achieve excellent outcomes in school in their lives and in their work after leaving us.

Whilst the children are with us, we aim to:

Spiritual - Explore beliefs, experience and faiths, feelings and values; enjoy learning about oneself, others and the surrounding world; use imagination and creativity and reflect on experiences

Moral - Recognise right and wrong and respect the law; understand consequences; investigate moral and ethical issues and offer reasoned views

Social - Use a range of social skills to participate in the local community and beyond; appreciate diverse viewpoints; participate, volunteer and cooperate; resolve conflict

Cultural - Appreciate cultural influences; participate in culture opportunities; understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity.

We want our children to understand how to engage in and take an active role in Modern Britain with a deepening understanding of British Values such as values of democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance.

We have created a curriculum, which develops an awareness of wider world issues in which they can have a voice. We want our pupils to leave St Thomas CE VC Primary School as secure and healthy individuals who are self-reliant, assured and motivated to succeed in life.

Our children come from diverse backgrounds with often challenging and difficult situations and with a range of abilities. The St Thomas Curriculum is designed so that every pupil, whatever their ability, situation or background, can be successful and achieve. We have designed a coherent and appropriate curriculum for our school community with a commitment at its core that children have the opportunity to overcome social disadvantage or barriers in order to thrive and exceed expectations.

Academic achievement is crucial and central to the success of our children and our curriculum is designed to address typical gaps in pupils' experience and context. We aim to broaden and develop our pupils' cultural capital through a range of enrichment activities designed to open pupils' eyes and offer pupils experiences that they may otherwise not have had the opportunity to participate in. As a result of this commitment, our focused curriculum includes provision for pupils with SEND.

Pupils are able to make links between areas of knowledge and learning as well as consolidating skills while being fully engaged. Our curriculum is progressive, which builds upon and expands previous learning. Curriculum experiences extend and deepen understanding of different topics whilst developing pupils' cultural capital. Planning ensures that the curriculum is accessible to all, whilst offering challenge and enrichment at every phase, stage and age.

Through a 'vocabulary rich' curriculum where literature and experiences enable pupils to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills. The desired aim is for pupils to be equipped in preparation for the next stage of their learning. Prepared with both knowledge and skills, the children are encouraged to question, reflect and evaluate ideas and concepts before forming their own opinions and beliefs.

Lessons support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, opening their eyes to the 'awe and wonder' of the world in which they live - giving them opportunities to explore and nurture their own interests and talents. The outdoor environment is integral to our curriculum –so that pupils are active, thus promoting their physical development and responsibility for their own health and well-being.

We plan our curriculum in four phases. We have a **long-term plan** for each year group, which clearly focuses on the objectives from the National Curriculum and how they are covered in each KRLP and throughout the mini projects that support it. Each plan builds on the learning and experiences of the previous. In our long-term plans we clearly link our topics to our local community, to citizenship and to questions to ask and answer throughout.

Our **medium-term plans** give a clear overview for each topic, provides the substantive and disciplinary knowledge to be covered over the topics. Each MTP is carefully divided by the class team to ensure there are a range of teaching and learning opportunities from each of the 4 stages detailed above.

Our **short-term plans** are those which our teachers write on a weekly basis. They show consideration of different groups of children, equal opportunities and teaching strategies.

In EYFS we use a continuous curriculum approach throughout the day, with the learning planned carefully so there is relevance, coherence and full coverage of the Early Learning Goals. Our school fully supports the principle that young children learn through play and by engaging in well planned, structured activities. Teaching in Reception builds on the experiences of children in their pre-school learning. We do all we can to build positive relationships with other pre-school providers in the area to ensure a smooth transition.

For maths we follow the scheme from White Rose Maths. For English we work on a 7-stage reading program, and a clearly sequenced writing program which we worked on developing with the LEA. More details of which can be found on our website.

6. Inclusion and Children with SEND

The curriculum in our school is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children at St Thomas. Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including: – More able pupils – Pupils with low prior attainment – Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds – Pupils with SEND – Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEND have access to all National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, ensuring there are no barriers to every pupil achieving. Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned to ensure teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and support pupils to take part in all subjects.

The Ofsted school inspection handbook states that leaders of good and outstanding schools ‘adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and including pupils with SEND, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life’.

Our curriculum, supported in part by Cornerstones and other selected schemes, is deliberately ambitious for all learners. One of the main principles of an ambitious curriculum is that ambitious learning, particularly knowledge acquisition, should be an entitlement for all children, regardless of their starting points or prior learning.

With this in mind, we strive to deliver lessons that all children can access and that all learners acquire the knowledge they need to succeed as they progress through school. Even though some lesson plans or resources may seem challenging at first, as teachers, we consider the different ways they can be used to ensure all children can access the learning intention of the lesson. However, we recognise that some learners will need adaptations within and around the lessons. And, more so, across school as a whole, as the curriculum embeds itself over the coming years.

It is crucial then that, when delivering an ambitious curriculum, that teachers use their professional expertise to offer the appropriate support for any child or group of children. Support could be offered through discussion, flexible use of resources and reading information aloud, particularly where the level of a text is too difficult for a child to access independently. Teachers ask themselves the questions 'How can I deliver this content in a way that makes sense to that child?' and 'How can I teach this lesson or use these resources so that all children can access the same knowledge?'

Our teachers carefully adapt, differentiate and remove any learning barriers within each lesson, with the goal of ALL learners leaving the lesson having learnt the same. For children with a SEND, this means help that is in addition to, or different, from the support generally given to all children of the same age or may mean a different outcome for the lesson is planned.

The way in which we reflect and review each lesson should also support retention of knowledge for all, however we do recognise that some of our pupils may need extra support and aids to be able to accomplish this, and some pupils may also need a bespoke curriculum offering which meets their specific needs.

7. Subjects covered

The school will have due regard to the national curriculum at all times throughout the academic year. The school will have due regard for the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'.

The school will ensure every pupil has access to the following core subjects:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- RE
- Relationships and health education

The school will ensure pupils also have access to the following foundation subjects:

- Art and design
- ICT
- Design and technology
- French (at KS2)
- Geography
- History
- Music
- PE

- Sex education

Details of what is included in the curriculum for each subject can be found in a specific curriculum policy for that subject. All of these policies are accessible via the school website.

8. Reporting and assessment

Assessments of what the children have learnt and what the children have remembered will be carried out in a variety of ways according to the nature of the subject.

Daily- within lessons- 'Reflect and Reviews' are used in each lesson to formatively assess what the children have remembered from the previous sessions and what the children have learnt in the current session. Staff also use questioning, marking and feedback as well as low stake quizzes and careful task planning to ensure they know what has been learn and what is to be taught next.

Weekly- all children are given homework which is used to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding of concepts covered within lessons.

All classes will also do an end of the week reflection on learning. In EYFS and Year 1 this involves looking at the floor book and asking questions on what they have learnt. In Years 2-6 Kahoot quizzes are used in class and at home to ensure subject matter from the past is not forgotten and current subject matter is remembered. The class with the highest % of children taking part outside of school also wins a trophy which is presented in Good Work Assembly.

Termly or half-termly- Informal assessments will be carried out termly to measure pupil progress. EYFS and Year 1 (Autumn and Spring) use progress grids and professional dialogue and cross class evidence moderation to make a TA judgement on each child. From Year 2-6 NFER assessments are used for Reading and Maths and our own Writing assessment grids to TA a range of writing. We also buy into the No More Marking Writing hub which allows our children's writing to be compared nationally to other schools who also buy into the assessment system.

The results of the assessments will be used to inform future planning and target setting and discussed termly at PPR and action planning meetings as part of our appraisal process. Results of informal assessments will be recorded on our internal trackers and reported to appraisal leads, the headteacher, governors and where appropriate parents and pupils.

Annually- Pupils will also complete national assessments. The results of these assessments will be reported back to the headteacher, pupils and their parents.

Special measures will be given to pupils who require them, e.g. pupils with SEND, pupils who are ill, or pupils who suffer from conditions that inhibit their academic performance.

Assessment of pupils with EAL will consider the pupils age, length of time in UK, previous education and ability in other languages.

Each child's attainment will be shared with parents on the 2 parents' evenings the school hosts and the end of year report sent to parents. However, teachers will also share any concerns or any achievements with parents and carers where the school feels this is needed in order to support the child.

All reporting and assessments will be conducted in line with the school's Primary Assessment Policy.

9. Extra Curricula activities and enrichment.

We are committed to developing the whole child and are very fortunate in the range and quality of extra-curricular activities we can offer; active fun and fitness, football, drawing, sewing, reading, gardening, choir...and even climbing mountains, walking along rivers and exploring caves!

Additionally, there numerous opportunities for enrichment; we go many educational visits, we have visitors into school, we camp in the school grounds, we have themed dress up days, our older children go on residential. Our story hub, outdoor classroom, orchard and garden enrich and provide meaningful, exciting learning opportunities also. Our termly or half-termly KR projects always begin with an enrichment opportunity to engage the pupils in their learning, allowing them to be immersed in the topic matter quickly.

10. Monitoring and Review

Our governing boards 'Standards and Effectiveness' is responsible for monitoring the way our school curriculum is implemented.

The head teacher is responsible for the day to day organisation of the curriculum. The head teacher monitors the curriculum through planning, classroom observation, liaising with coordinators and the Leadership Team.

Subject leaders monitor the way their subject is taught throughout school. They examine long term and medium-term plans and advise on appropriate teaching strategies. Subject leaders have responsibility for monitoring standards and ensuring teachers have the skills and resources they need.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and relevant stakeholders.