



ST MARGARET'S PREP CALNE

Curriculum Policy

'Inspiring Excellence'

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the Curriculum at St Margaret's Preparatory School. The policy should be read in conjunction with planning documentation, subject policies, the EYFS, Learning Support (incorporating EAL) and MAGT policies, and documentation relating to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023).

St Margaret's is committed to the attainment and personal development of pupils and the curriculum is designed with these priorities at the forefront. The curriculum also ensures that appropriate attention is given to the need to actively promote fundamental British Values across all lessons and all activities within the school.

1 Introduction

1.1 Teaching and learning is the core purpose of our School. It is the method through which we provide a curriculum that is as broad and balanced as possible. It is based to a large extent on the 2014 Primary National Curriculum in England and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage National Curriculum but also meets the requirements of both Common Entrance and Scholarships of senior schools to which our pupils go and the various extra-curricular activities that we organise in order to enrich the children's experience. It also includes the 'hidden curriculum' – what the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. We want our pupils to grow into positive, responsible people, who can work and co-operate with others, while at the same time developing their knowledge and skills, in order to achieve their true potential.

1.2 We seek the highest standards of attainment and levels of progress for all our children and inspire excellence in every aspect of the children's learning. We also value the breadth of the curriculum that we provide. We aim to foster creativity in the St Margaret's pupils, and to help them become independent learners. Above all, we believe that learning should be an enjoyable experience for all.

2 Core Values

2.1 The St Margaret's curriculum is underpinned by the core values that we hold dear at our school.

The curriculum is the means by which the school achieves its objective of educating all our children in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to lead fulfilling and successful lives.

2.2 St Margaret's follows the following values upon which we have based our curriculum:

- We value children's inherent curiosity of the world around them; we listen to the views of individual children, and we promote respect for diverse cultures.
- We value the spiritual and moral development of each person, as well as their intellectual and physical growth.
- We promote kindness and value the importance of each person in our community. We organise our curriculum to promote inclusion, co-operation and understanding among all members of our community.
- We encourage our children to be courageous in their learning and promote the belief of learning from our mistakes. We want our children to be bold in their decision making yet reflective in their experiences.
- We promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Integrity is key and we encourage our children to develop strong moral principles. We value the rights enjoyed by each person in our society. We respect each child in our school for who they are, and we treat them with fairness and honesty. We want to enable each person to persevere in their learning and be the best they can be and we provide equal opportunities for all our pupils.
- We value our environment, and we want to teach our pupils, through our curriculum, how we should take care of the world, not only for ourselves, but also for future generations.

3 Aims and objectives

3.1 Teaching and learning is seen as a process of co-operation between teachers and children with the encouragement and support of parents and other pertinent members in the community. All members of the school community (teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, pupils and governors) work towards the school's aims which are:

- to enable all children to learn, and develop their skills, to their highest possible standards. In this connection we seek to tailor teaching and learning opportunities to the individual needs of our pupils. This includes pupils with special or additional needs and those who are able, gifted and talented;
- to promote a positive attitude towards learning, so that children enjoy coming to school, and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning;
- to teach children the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and computing;
- to enable children to be creative and to develop their own thinking;
- to teach children about the developing world, including how their environment and society have changed over time;
- to help children understand Britain's cultural heritage;

- to appreciate and value the contribution made by all ethnic groups in our multi-cultural society;
- to enable children to be positive citizens;
- to broadly follow the requirements of the 2014 Primary National Curriculum in England, the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Wiltshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education;
- to teach children to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to distinguish right from wrong;
- to help children understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all;
- to enable children to have respect for themselves and high self-esteem, and to live and work co-operatively with others.

4 Organisation and planning

4.1 We plan our curriculum in three phases. We agree a long-term plan for each class throughout the school. This encompasses the statutory programmes of study for all subjects as laid out in the 2014 Primary National Curriculum in England and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This indicates what themes and units are to be taught in each term, and to which groups of children, and includes a comprehensive programme for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE).

In pre-prep, we deliver a thematic approach to learning as we recognise that children learn best when experiencing knowledge in a wider context. They begin to see relationships and connections across time, place, and disciplines and learning about wider themes and related concepts and facts more closely resembles how life is experienced outside of school and the classroom.

Themes have been selected which allow the children to make links with their own community and identity as well as allowing them to compare and contrast these with other geographical locations and periods from history. The thematic approach allows the children to become immersed in their learning and develops a meaningful centre around which activities, tasks, and assessments are focused.

In Years 3 - 6 we generally teach subjects separately in blocked units, although we are continually developing and promoting cross-curricular links which organically arise dependent on the area of study. This more subject specific model and knowledge-based approach for our older children, focuses on in-depth understanding of topic areas and uses developments in cognitive psychology and theories of working memory as guides for curriculum design in order to create an immersive experience where knowledge retention is promoted.

Across the school, high quality texts are studied which are interrogated and deconstructed in order for the children to understand the structure and mechanics of writing. This is followed by shared and modelled writing with the teacher, which helps to nurture the children's fluency and creativity. The children then apply their skills in independent pieces of writing which are finally edited and improved by the individual child as well as receiving some input from their peers. Throughout the process, the children are taught to read as writers and write as readers.

Throughout the school we structure the learning carefully to ensure that there is planned progression in all curriculum areas. We review this long-term plan on an annual basis.

4.2 Curriculum maps are then produced for each term to give clear guidance on the objectives taught and to document the relationship between every component of the curriculum.

4.3 Our short-term unit plans are those that the staff write at the start of a unit of work using the rationale of 'hook-harness-deepen-demonstrate'. We use these to set out the learning path for the unit, objectives for each lesson, to identify what resources and activities we are going to use and to plan outcomes. Additionally, short term unit plans inform future planning and lessons are evaluated at the end of each unit in order to reflect on the successes as well as allow opportunity for any modifications to be applied. Differentiation is clearly identified.

5 The curriculum and inclusion

5.1 The curriculum at St Margaret's is designed to be accessed by all children who attend the school. If children have additional learning needs or disabilities, we implement our procedures as laid out in our Learning Support policy. If we think it necessary to modify some children's access to the curriculum, we only do this after their parents have been consulted.

5.2 Our schemes of work address the diversity and values of our society, and reflect the 2014 Primary National Curriculum in England and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage programmes of study.

6 The Early Years Foundation Stage

6.1 The curriculum that we teach in the Nursery and Reception classes meets the requirements set out in the 2023 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Our curriculum planning focuses on the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Reception year, as set out in this document, and on developing children's skills and experiences.

6.2 High quality learning experiences are planned that inspire and promote curiosity so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind. Realistic and challenging learning opportunities are provided around the needs and interests of each individual child and activities and outcomes are assessed and reviewed regularly.

6.2 We fully support the principle that young children learn through play and there is a balance of child initiated and teacher directed activities. Teaching in the Reception year builds on the experiences of the children in their pre-school learning. We do all we can to build positive partnerships with the various nurseries and other pre-school providers in the area.

6.3 As part of Reception, staff assess the skills development of every pupil. As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess the children's development and learning to inform our future plans and observations are recorded in a variety of ways. This assessment forms an important part of the future curriculum planning for each child. In the Nursery, assessment is based upon the Development Matters points as laid out in the EYFS document.

6.4 We are well aware that all children need the support of both the parents and the teachers to make good progress in school. We strive to build positive links with the parents of each child, by keeping them informed about how the children are being taught, and how well each child is progressing.

7 Key skills

7.1 By the end of each Key Stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in each individual programme of study. At St Margaret's we value the skills of effective learning, including:

- communication – including linguistic skills, the ability to present ideas and to listen to others;
- creative thinking - using abilities and 'soft skills' to come up with new solutions to problems;
- collaborative working - pupils working together on activities or learning tasks in a group small enough for everyone to participate on a collective task that has been clearly assigned;
- creativity - the interaction between the learning environment, both physical and social, the attitudes and attributes of both teachers and pupils, and a clear problem-solving process which produces a perceptible product.

7.2 In our curriculum planning, we emphasise these skills of effective learning, so that the children's progress in all areas can be identified and monitored. All teachers seek to contribute to a child's progress in these skills, because we believe that they are vital if they are to develop their true potential. A thorough programme of assessment supports and monitors all aspects of teaching and learning and informs future planning. (See Assessment & Marking Policy)

8 The role of the Subject Leader

8.1 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.
- keep abreast of developments around their subject.

8.2 St Margaret's gives Subject Leaders non-contact time as appropriate, 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 and appropriate coverage of the 2014 Primary National Curriculum in England and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and sees that progression is planned into units of work.

9 Monitoring and review

9.1 The Senior Leadership Team, on behalf of the Governing Body, is responsible for monitoring the way in which the school curriculum is implemented. They review each subject area during their regular and ongoing cycle of review and development.

9.2 Members of SLT monitor lesson plans and units of work, ensuring that all classes are taught the full requirements of the agreed curriculum, and that all lessons have appropriate learning objectives and aspirational outcomes.

9.3 The Senior Leadership Team is supported by the Subject Leaders who monitor the way in which their subject is taught throughout the school. They examine planning and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used. Subject Leaders also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

9.4 Governors receive regular reports and data on the progress of children across the school to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities to oversee the quality of teaching and learning and, most importantly, the achievement and outcomes for all our pupils.

This policy considers at its heart, children's rights as exemplified by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Specifically:

- Article 29 – Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.
- Article 31 – Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Senior Leadership Team.

Effective Date

This policy was last reviewed in September 2023