

St. John's Primary School – Our Curriculum

Our curriculum is based around a series of rich and engaging topics which aim to develop a love of learning in all of our pupils. We seek to challenge and motivate our children by teaching topics which tap into their passions – whether that's Lego, dinosaurs, World War II, the Ancient Egyptians or chocolate!

We use the Programmes of Study from the 2014 National Curriculum but tailor them to the needs and interests of our pupils, and to our school context and local community. Subjects are integrated into the topics as far as possible, but may also be taught discretely when that is more appropriate. We strive to involve our pupils in planning the topics and give them choices over their own learning.

We make extensive use of resources and expertise beyond the school. Visitors such as storytellers, athletes and theatre groups are invited to St. John's to share their skills and knowledge and to inspire our pupils. Learning is taken outside the classroom wherever possible, whether through Maths in the playground, storytelling on the outdoor stage, Science lessons by the pond or Forest School sessions on the school field. Teachers frequently take their classes on educational visits to extend their learning. Recent destinations have included Cadbury's World, the BIG BANG Science Fair, the River and Rowing Museum, the Lookout Centre and the Museum of Natural History in Oxford, we have also taken pupils further afield to the Royal Observatory and National Maritime Museum in London and Science Museum.

We believe that our pupils learn best when their learning involves real experiences and has a real purpose and audience. Topics culminate in an Open Morning or Open Afternoon where children share their learning with their parents. This may take the form of exhibitions of work, published writing, performances of music, story-telling or dance, or perhaps a sale of pupils' finished work.

Our teachers use ongoing assessments of their pupils' learning in order to ensure that throughout our topics, teaching is well-matched to pupils' needs. Tasks are differentiated in order to provide an appropriate level of support and challenge for each pupil.

Our curriculum is based around using texts linked to the topic. We aim to promote reading through use of high quality texts and use these to provide stimulus for our writing units. When planning topics, teachers aim to provide as many opportunities for writing as possible. We use Storytelling and Talk for Writing strategies to develop pupils' oral skills and written language.

We teach Maths through a 'Maths Mastery' approach. This approach is based on teaching children concepts using practical 'concrete' resources and pictorial representations before moving on to the abstract version of a concept. We use this approach in all year groups. Mastery aims to develop fluency, reasoning and problem solving for all pupils through providing opportunities for deep learning.

As a values school, all of our assemblies are based around positive values which change each fortnight. The values also underpin our PSHE curriculum and behaviour policy. In Religious Education we cover themes within the four religions of Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. As part of our RE education, children have visited a range of places of worship.

We also have a programme of residential visits which begins with a “Nearly a Sleepover” for Year 2 pupils and ends with our Year 6 pupils enjoying a five day adventure at Yenworthy Lodge in Devon. Our curriculum is further enriched by a range of after-school clubs which are offered by staff and parents.

Throughout our curriculum, we seek to develop our pupils’ critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills, as well as their resilience and confidence to take risks. We encourage children to reflect on their role as global citizens and to lead active lives. Our aim is to create inquisitive, confident and knowledgeable learners, with the capacity to work effectively with others and with the resilience to cope with whatever challenges they meet on their learning journey both at St. John’s, as they move on to secondary school and into adulthood.