

Curriculum Policy



St. MICHAEL'S
CE (CONTROLLED) INFANT SCHOOL

Reviewed October 2024
To Be Reviewed by October 2026

Aims

Our curriculum intention is based on our core learning principles:

- We are all lifelong learners and always learning
- Diversity is celebrated in our school
- Parents and families are partners in education
- Quality learning happens when learners are challenged and engaged
- We believe that using story is key to developing the imagination, language and communication skills of our children
- We try to create learning experiences that connect with real life, purpose and problem solving
- We have high expectations for all learners
- We learn best by learning together
- When possible, learning is personalised to an individual's needs
- Learners develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to be confident future global citizens

Our curriculum aims to place value on the children's current experiences and builds on what they already know through carefully planned knowledge and skills progression documents. We ensure that the knowledge taught is drawn from the National Curriculum and we place a high emphasis on the key vocabulary that the children will learn. We do try and make links across the curriculum if possible, because we believe that learning is not always just learning about a subject in isolation, but applying skills across different subjects. This also provides more opportunities for retrieval practice.

Our intention is to represent our diverse community through the curriculum so that all children feel valued and a sense of belonging. We revisited the History and Geography curriculum to ensure that we are providing the children with an understanding of their locality and where they come from. In the words of Ben Newmark: 'Our curriculum should whisper to our children "you belong. You did not come from nowhere. You are one of us. All this came before you, and one day you might add to it"' (B. Newmark 'Why Teach?' 2019).

By placing a high emphasis on the use of story in our curriculum, we intend that our children develop empathy for others and become problem solvers, having to think about what it means to be human. Putting learning in a context of story has also been proven to help children to remember key learning. As a Christian school, we want the children to value and respect the beliefs and cultures of others, learning about what it is to be a human being. Whether this is learning from mistakes made in the past in History, learning about the

decision a character makes in literacy or finding out about the Christian values of love and forgiveness through the example Jesus taught in R.E- the children are engaged through story.

There is a separate intention statement for each subject so that staff and children are clear about the purpose of each subject.

National Curriculum

The curriculum provided for our pupils will cover the following National Curriculum subjects:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Art and Design
- Computing
- Design Technology
- Geography
- History
- Music
- PE
- RE (for which we follow the Hampshire agreed syllabus “Living Difference”)
- PSHE

As an Infant school, we recognise that it is our priority to enable our pupils to learn to read so that they will then be able to access the rest of the curriculum. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum and try to ignite in our children a curiosity for learning.

In Early Years, children follow the EYFS and work towards the Early Learning Goals that are assessed at the end of the Reception Year. Subject leaders have had input into the Early Years curriculum design to ensure that children are well prepared for the KS1 curriculum. This can be seen on the subject progression of knowledge and skills documents.

A Pedagogy of Retrieval

There are different ways in which we support our children to remember the knowledge that has been taught:

1. The curriculum is carefully sequenced so that new learning builds on what has been learnt before. Each unit of work has explicit links to previous learning and class teachers regularly revisit prior learning with the children. They may do this through the use of photographs, slides and quick question and answer revision sessions.
2. We remind the children about what a subject is about so that they understand what 'geography' means. Curriculum leaders provide a clear definition of what each subject means and share these with the teaching and support staff. Visual timetables help children to see what they are learning each day and to recap on the meaning of each subject.
3. Linked to the above point, we will try and talk to the children about the disciplines of a subject e.g: what would a mathematician do? What would a scientist do if they wanted to find out the answer to these questions?
4. There is a high emphasis placed on the key vocabulary for a unit of work. Some children will need support to be introduced to the key vocabulary through pre-teaching. The key vocabulary should be revised and revisited so that it is not forgotten. We might use visual cues to help our children remember the key vocabulary that they are taught.
5. 'Working walls' are used in Maths, English and Science to display key concepts and vocabulary and to help children to visualise the 'learning journey' they are on and how pieces of learning link together and build on one another.
6. We use story to try and help children to remember their learning. Daniel Willingham comments on the importance of story and emotional connection for supporting memory ('Why don't students like school?'- D.T Willingham). Wherever possible, we share texts and songs to reinforce key learning across the curriculum. Links to these are included in each unit of work.
7. Our curriculum is structured in such a way that where possible we make links across subjects: e.g: in Y1, the children learn about toys from the past in History, study texts linked to lost toys in English and also respond expressively to the theme of toys in Music and Dance lessons.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural

There are numerous opportunities for supporting the pupils' SMSC development through all areas of the curriculum. Spiritual development is promoted through RE sessions and a range of Collective Worship where children are given opportunities to think about big questions. When planning Collective Worship, we use the 'windows', 'mirrors' and 'doors' model where children are able to look out and learn about something new, reflect on how this makes them feel and then take this learning with them as they go through the day.

Our use of Jigsaw for PSHE provides the children with opportunities to reflect on morals and to think about our school values. The children learn about their feelings and emotions and each classroom uses The Colour Monster as a way of enabling the children to reflect on how they are feeling.

Throughout our curriculum, we aim to represent our diverse community and have recently changed some of our units of work to ensure that we are providing pupils with a variety of opportunities to learn about other cultures. The texts that we have chosen to read to our children at the end of the day, also represent our diverse community and provide our children with opportunities to discuss their feelings and emotions : <https://st-michaels-inf.hants.sch.uk/curriculum/reading-for-pleasure>

For more information, please see our SMSC policy on our school website.

Roles and responsibilities

The Curriculum Leader (the Deputy Headteacher) maintains an overview of the curriculum provided by the school and works in partnership with the Headteacher on a range of strategic planning, monitoring and evaluating tasks, from the full range of evidence provided by other staff. Subject Leaders ensure that all the aspects of the National Curriculum content are identified within the curriculum overviews. Subject Leaders also produce annual action plans for their subjects, support the writing of medium-term plans of class teachers, analyse the standards within their subject, provide or signpost staff towards training and resources and participate in training and research. Class teachers have responsibility for the standards their pupils achieve, the progress they make and the evidence of this learning.

Monitoring and evaluating

The school has a monitoring and development plan and this is reviewed each term. The Headteacher and Curriculum Leader will report their findings through regular reports to Governors, including the termly HT reports, to governors and provide feedback to staff to celebrate strengths and identify aspects for improvements. Subject Leaders will monitor and evaluate the planning and standards achieved by pupils. They will also evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subject through observations, learning walks, data analysis, book scrutinies and pupil interviews. They will provide feedback to governors, the Headteacher and staff to celebrate strengths and identify aspects for improvement. The Governors monitor the implementation and impact of the curriculum.

Assessment

Across all subjects, teachers use formative assessment each lesson to determine how secure children are with the key learning, how ready they are to move on and to identify any misconceptions. This could be carried out by strategies such as: quick quizzes e.g. flashback four, teacher questioning, marking of work, dialogue in the lesson or posing a problem. In

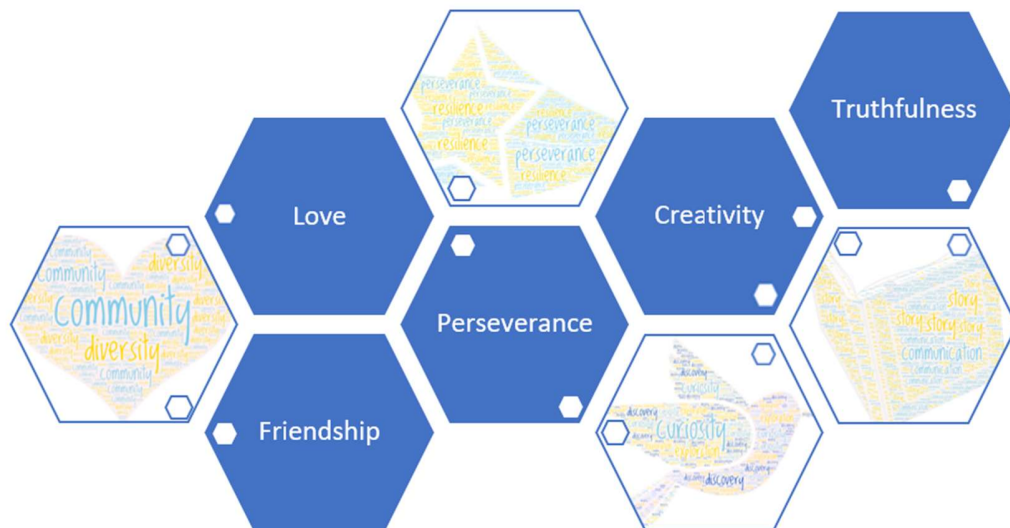
Maths and English, teachers have Assessment for Learning proformas which they complete each lesson to inform flexible groupings and future planning.

At the end of each unit of work, teachers will record summative assessment against key outcomes using the framework constructed by subject leaders. These assessment documents have been designed to minimise teacher workload.

In phonics, we assess children every six weeks, as set out in our Little Wandle SSP programme. This assessment is used to inform future planning and also to match the reading books closely to children's phonic knowledge.

Our Curriculum Golden Threads

The 'golden threads' which run through our curriculum are closely aligned with our school Christian values:



Curiosity, discovery and exploration

In this thread, we open children's eyes to the beauty of nature and the wonders of the world all around them. Our curriculum seeks to maximise opportunities for children to learn outside in our gardens, in the school grounds and in the local area. We provide rich experiences such as cooking, gardening and visits from experts to support children's vocabulary development and their conceptual understanding. In Early Years, children have sustained periods of exploration with natural materials and loose parts as part of carefully planned play. As children progress into Key Stage One on their journey of discovery, they continue to have opportunities to learn through real experience and in playful ways. Children develop the enquiry skills relevant to the disciplines of science, history, geography and R.E. They learn to pose their own questions, to make observations and gather information, and to draw conclusions.



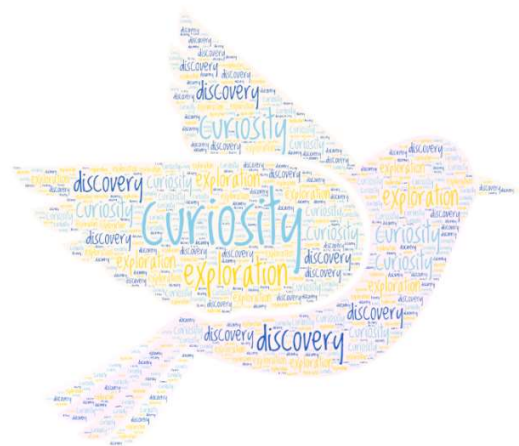
Communication and story

Story is at the heart of the learning at St. Michael's and through this thread we aim to support every child to develop a lifelong love of reading and to be able to express their own ideas clearly to others. Alongside the texts which drive learning across the curriculum, children have daily opportunities to share quality read-aloud texts in a range of genres which promote empathy, inclusivity and diversity

and introduce vocabulary from a range of semantic fields. Subject-specific vocabulary is explicitly taught using visual supports and regular retrieval practice supports children to build their vocabularies over time. Children learn to use art, music and drama to communicate ideas, moods and feelings. Using the *Mantle of the Expert* approach in history, they 'step into stories', work collaboratively and take on expert roles to bring their learning alive.

Community and diversity

In this thread, we develop a culture of inclusion for all where everyone feels proud of their identity and is able to contribute to our school family. Our



curriculum gives children windows, where they look out onto the wider world and broaden their experiences; mirrors, where they see themselves reflected and can consider their own experiences and insights; and doors, where they can go out into the world and take positive action in response to what they have learnt. Over their three years with us, children study a range of diverse literary characters, historical figures, artists and musicians. Through history, they learn about discrimination and the importance of democracy, and in science, children learn to work together as a community to protect our environment. Our pupil premium ensures that all children have access to extracurricular clubs to enhance their learning.



Perseverance and resilience

In this thread, children learn that if you try, try, try then you can, can, can! Alongside our discrete learning in P.S.H.E, we use co-regulation techniques to support children to build emotional resilience as they encounter change and challenge. To develop children's physical resilience, we maximise opportunities for teaching about healthy lifestyles in science, P.E. and D.T. We place learning in purposeful contexts with problems to solve so that children are motivated to persevere. Over their time with us, children gain an understanding of the importance of testing out ideas, practising and refining new skills and evaluating their progress before reaching a final successful outcome. To raise children's aspirations, we study historical figures and artists who have overcome adversity to achieve their goals.

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