

'Let your Light Shine!'

Curriculum Statement: We believe that every child should be prepared for an ever changing world through an inspiring, tailor-made, inclusive creative curriculum that captures their curiosity and equips them with the deep knowledge and skills to let their light shine.

Our school ethos, vision and aims create a school underpinned with Christian values where everyone feels valued, has the opportunity to explore and develop their strengths and is able to participate in new experiences in order to achieve. Our school values of Love, respect, humility, hope, forgiveness, friendship, happiness, wisdom, honesty, freedom, courage and trust are essential in supporting every aspect of learning. We aim to become an inspirational school to produce good citizens for the future in an atmosphere that promotes confidence, high academic achievement, physical health and emotional well-being. Understanding each individual and their potential, and striving to work actively together is central to the Christian faith we uphold. We ensure children learn within a rich, inspiring and engaging environment where they feel safe and respected. Our aim is to stimulate thinking and promote motivation, drive and ambition to succeed.

The aims which underpin our curriculum at St. Thomas are:

- To have our children and learning at the heart of everything we do.
- To build upon prior knowledge to ensure each child achieves their full potential, whether in school or via remote learning.
- To provide inspirational and memorable learning opportunities that apply and deepen knowledge, skills and understanding.
- To encourage resilience in all learners in an environment where both success and failure are celebrated.

How do we Teach and Learn?

Leading on from the child-centred approach within the Early Years, our curriculum highlights sets of skills and knowledge which are progressive, enabling children to continue to build upon secure foundations. Our **SHINE** curriculum was created to enable all children to 'Let their Light Shine' in everything they do.

SHINE stands for;

S – Skills and knowledge based

H – High Expectations

I - Innovative

N - Nurturing

E – Empowering

Within each area of the curriculum we engage and inspire all learners, sparking their imagination and promoting interest and enthusiasm to ask questions to develop understanding and interest to learn more. Our children drive the learning process. Throughout projects there are ‘wow’ events and hooks to maintain interest and create discussion. Links are made to high quality texts, real life problems involving mathematical concepts and scientific knowledge to gain a better understanding of the world. Curriculum overviews and knowledge organisers highlight key knowledge and skills as well as specific subject vocabulary. We value independent research and promote the skills of life long learning using creative home learning challenges which enable the children to work collaboratively with their families. Curriculum projects are tailored to the needs of our children, focusing on new and meaningful learning experiences both in and out of the classroom, utilising the outdoors, wider community and our local area. To supplement this, curriculum events are planned to extend learning such as multi-cultural days, Fairtrade and other charity days, ‘Let your Light Shine’ week, World Book Day, Science days and British Values events. We take each step along the learning journey with our children, guiding and supporting them to develop a Growth Mindset to believe that they are amazing, encouraging them to believe in themselves.

S – Skills and knowledge based

- Provide a rich and immersive curriculum.
- Transferable, subject-specific, cross-curricular and age-related skills taught throughout school.
- Select/utilise specific knowledge and/or skills to address challenges.
- Knowledge and skills are intertwined showing they are equally important.
- Learning is sequenced in a progressive manner.

H – High Expectations

- Drive high achievement.
- Encourage and celebrate every success however big or small.
- Challenge thinking.
- Maximise individual potential and growth.
- Develop resilience and resourcefulness to overcome challenges.
- Target setting stretches individuals and is applicable to their needs.

I – Innovative

- Use ‘wow’ events and outdoor learning opportunities to introduce projects and aspects of the curriculum.

- Learning outcomes documented in a variety of ways, such as news reports, models, artwork, videos, interviews or games.
- Inclusion of active enquiry, investigative and problem solving activities.
- First hand experiences which are reflected in a highly engaging, broad and balanced curriculum.
- Use a variety of resources, contexts and experiences to promote exploration.

N – Nurturing

- Build confidence to create higher aspirations in life.
- Provide a kind, caring environment where children feel encouraged and supported.
- Instill the need to be fair and just.
- Promote the importance of valuing and respecting everyone.
- Celebrate the uniqueness and gifts of each individual.
- Develop well-rounded individuals socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and creatively.
- Create strong partnerships with parents, carers and the wider community to support individual growth and development.

E – Empowering

- Encourage pupils to be braver, stronger and believe in themselves.
- Boost ambition to demonstrate anything is possible.
- Develop understanding of the wider world, individual rights and the control they have over their own future.
- Provide pupils with the knowledge and skills to achieve their dreams.
- Extend vocabulary to enable all to express themselves clearly.

As a school, we value the importance of vocabulary by making words a priority. Throughout our SHINE curriculum the children are introduced to the essential vocabulary needed to understand new knowledge, skills and concepts. Teaching and learning grasps every opportunity to extend and develop our children's vocabulary and make connections. We want all our children to acquire a wide vocabulary and gain a good understanding of words throughout all curriculum projects to empower them and enrich their lives. We want our children to quickly become adept at using more complex language and this is why vocabulary underpins all aspects of the curriculum and every interaction. We promote a vocabulary rich environment throughout our school making it easily accessible and a constant, surrounding them and guiding them each and every day. It is our intention that by the time our children leave St. Thomas', all have a good understanding of many different words and their meaning, are using and understanding these words in their speech, reading and writing and have developed a 'word consciousness' to help them understand vocabulary both in their academically and in their daily lives.

Key Focuses:

- Key Vocabulary for each curriculum project.
- Knowledge Organisers highlighting key vocabulary and knowledge. (Sent home and on our website to practise and become proficient.)
- Knowledge Organiser Displays in class to track learning throughout the project.
- Exposure to new vocabulary is a constant.
- Discussions to understand key terminology within the curriculum to contextualise and make connections.
- Learning environment supports vocabulary development with key words, images and contextualised examples clearly displayed.
- Structured opportunities to practise reading and writing vocabulary to develop competency.

What are our Assessment Outcome and the Impact of our Curriculum?

High quality teaching across the school provides strong foundations for learning, utilising opportunities to collaborate and extend thinking. Our curriculum is tracked using documents which focus on both knowledge and skills linked to age related expectations. The curriculum is organised to allow for progression in both. Progression documents show coverage and knowledge organisers display key aspects and vocabulary children must learn within each project. Teachers assess and track children's achievements and development throughout the year. The curriculum design and high level of support we provide our children with allows for targeted interventions where needed. Target setting is in place to assist our children in understanding their next steps and what they need to do in order to meet their potential.

Enjoyment of the curriculum develops a love of learning, which is reflected in the positive attitude visible throughout school. Behavioural expectations are high, with children understanding systems in place to ensure this is consistent. Praise, encouragement and rewards such as Dojo points have an enormous impact on the effort and achievement of each and every child.

Collaboration of staff and their professional development is of upmost importance, ensuring the standards, progress and achievements remain high. Workshops and training are high priority. In addition, our staff work alongside other schools in the local area to benefit teaching and learning at St. Thomas'. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is on-going throughout the year by senior leadership and subject leaders to evaluate the impact of our curriculum. Strengths are highlighted and priorities identified for further development. Outcomes are regularly shared within school and the governing body as invited to partake in our learning journey regularly throughout the year.