

Our Curriculum

School Aims and Values

White Notley Church of England Primary School is a community which embraces a Christian ethos and values the individual.

We encourage and expect care and respect for one another, ourselves and the environment.

We aim to motivate and challenge all members of the school community in a secure and exciting learning environment.

We aim to prepare children for a multi-cultural society and to take an active role as a global citizen.

We seek to develop and promote a life-long love of learning that ensures everyone reaches his or her full potential.

We aim to nurture particular gifts and talents through excellent teaching of pupils and continuing professional development of adults.

This policy sets out an overview of the philosophy and values that underpin our curriculum provision, along with the models of pedagogy that are used to implement our vision of a modern, relevant education for all our pupils.

'A curriculum for the 21st century will reflect an understanding and acknowledgement of the changing nature of young people as learners and the challenges and demands that will continue to shape their learning in the future. Young people will need a wide and adaptive set of skills to meet the changing expectations of society and to contribute to the creation of a more productive, sustainable and just society.' (ACARA, University of Melbourne. 2009)

We define our 'curriculum' in the broadest possible terms, to embrace all the learning opportunities, formal and informal, that are planned for children in school to encourage their further growth and development.

Aims

At White Notley our curriculum provision will:

- promote high standards of learning and attainment for children, enabling each one to reach their maximum potential;

- enthuse children with a sense of awe and wonder for exploring their world;
- prepare children to be life-long learners who are always seeking to improve their understanding;
- equip children with the essential skills, understanding, attributes and attitudes needed to play a full, successful part in society;
- promote the core values of the school - **Compassion, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility and Aspire**

We believe in a curriculum that:

- is firmly based on, and promotes, Christian values
- emphasises a progression of transferable skills
- develops the whole person
- is broad and balanced
- makes meaningful links between different aspects of learning
- is filled with rich, first-hand, purposeful experiences
- is relevant and tailored to the needs of each child
- supports a pedagogy that promotes children's active participation in learning and develops enquiring minds
- values both independence and interdependence within the community of learners
- is flexible and responsive to individual needs and interests
- embraces the use of the local environment and expertise beyond the classroom
- looks to the future and the needs and responsibilities of future citizens in a rapidly changing world
- possesses a significant local, national and global dimension
- is coherent and consistent in its values and underpinning philosophy of knowledge, teaching and learning

Curriculum Areas

The school possesses policies and schemes of work for each curriculum area in the National Curriculum, whose provisions are compulsory for all maintained schools in England. These are

- **English:** Reading, Writing (including spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation) and Spoken Language
- **Mathematics:** Number (place value; addition and subtraction; multiplication and division; fractions, including decimals, percentages, ratio and proportion, as appropriate); Measurement; Geometry (properties of shapes; position and direction); Statistics; Algebra (Upper Key Stage 2)
- **Science**
- **Art and design**
- **Computing**
- **Languages** (this provision is statutory for Key Stage 2 - however, we have decided to teach a modern foreign language - French - across the whole school)
- **Design and technology** (including food technology)
- **Geography**
- **History**
- **Music**
- **Physical Education**

In addition to these we also teach

- **Religious Education**, as outlined by the Essex Locally Agreed Syllabus and informed by the character of our school as a Christian religious foundation. We also use a resource, entitled '**Understanding Christianity**' that greatly enhances children's theological literacy and conceptual understanding.
- **PSHE Citizenship/ PSED** that covers personal development and safety (including anti-bullying and e-safety); healthy lifestyles; Sex and Relationships Education; Drugs Awareness and a focus on critical thinking, relating to our statement on British Values
- **Global citizenship** (mainly through the medium of our Kenya Partnership)

- **Philosophy for Children (P4C)** which also focusses on the teaching of speaking and listening, observational acuities, visual literacy, developing questions and responses, enquiry, thinking skills and critical awareness.

A long term curriculum plan is produced each academic year and includes teaching and learning to be covered on a termly basis, including special events such as cross-curriculum weeks. Our long term plans are organised on a two year cycle to ensure continuity and progression, whilst avoiding needless repetition. As children move through the school, the expectation for the sophistication of their learning is increased. They will engage in skills of a similar nature, but at a higher level of understanding - a process often described as 'the spiral curriculum'.

Acts of Worship form a major aspect of our learning in school - they give the school a sense of spiritual direction and provide the children the opportunity to come together as a reflective community. Acts of Worship are mainly of a Christian nature, although we focus annually on the appreciation of a non-Christian festival, as part of our commitment to preparing children to be active citizens in a multicultural society. Acts of Worship greatly enhance children's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development.

Extra-curricular clubs also form an important part of the school's provision, especially in sports and creative pursuits.

Learning based on the local environment and educational visits further afield (including outdoor/ adventurous activities on residential visits) make learning 'come alive' for children and support team building.

Early Years/ Foundation Stage

The Reception Class follows the Early Years/ Foundation Stage Framework. This curriculum model sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old. All maintained schools and Ofsted-registered early years' providers must follow the EYFS, including childminders, preschools, nurseries and school reception classes. Our Reception Class is fully integrated into the life of the school and participates in many of the same topics and activities (e.g. plays and performances) as Key Stage 1. Areas of the EYFS/ Foundation curriculum include Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Communication and Language; Physical Development;

Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

Curriculum organisation

The Skills-based Curriculum

As noted above, our curriculum concentrates on the development of transferable skills i.e. acuties that can be applied across a range of different contexts. Skills are the starting point for curriculum planning and the focus of our pedagogy. Why is this so?

- *Skills transform the nature of the learner and lead to personal growth, empowerment and fulfilment of potential i.e. they make you a more adaptable and effective learner;
- *Skills encourage learners' independence and interdependence (i.e. children can work individually or in a group, contributing to a joint enterprise);
- *Skills enable children to understand links within a body of learning because they are not rigidly compartmentalised (often described as the holistic or organic curriculum, integrated cross curriculum links, or 'the seamless coat of learning');
- *Skills enable the transfer of acuties from one context to another and draw on different areas of experience;
- *Skills facilitate individuals becoming active, discerning global citizens;
- *Skills allow individuals to contribute to the public good and the economic well-being of society;
- *In the post-modern period of rapid and sustained socio-economic and technological change, 'facts' may quickly become outmoded;
- *The amount of information readily available and accessible is huge - children need to have the skills to find, identify, research, select, process, evaluate, interpret, synthesise and apply information;
- *A skills-based approach is a curriculum model that is in line with widely accepted epistemology (knowledge theory)

Our Learning Skills

In addition to the skills linked to particular curriculum areas, we also concentrate on the teaching of six metacognitive skills or dispositions, often summed up in the phrase 'learning how to learn.' We usually define these meta-skills for children through a series of questions:

CREATIVITY

Are you looking at things in different ways?

Are you considering different ideas or solutions to problems?

Are you using your imagination?

CRITICAL CURIOSITY

Are you asking questions?

Are you wondering why things happen the way they do?

Are you researching or finding things out?

MEANING MAKING

Are you making links between what you are learning and what you already know?

Are you looking at how things fit together?

RESILIENCE

Are you working at a challenge and not giving up?

Are you prepared to have a go and not worry about making mistakes?

STRATEGIC AWARENESS

Are you reflecting on your learning and evaluating how well you have done?

LEARNING RELATIONSHIPS

Can you learn in different ways?

Can you learn by working with a partner, a group or by yourself?

Can you listen effectively to other people and communicate your ideas to them?

Each one of these skills is associated with a character to enable children of all ages to access them. (Appendix IV)

We believe these metacognitive skills are vital - poor learners show marked delays in metacognitive development and are less flexible in trying different approaches. More able and gifted children possess more metacognitive awareness and manage learning resources effectively.

Pedagogy

Areas of the curriculum may be taught as discrete aspects of learning (particularly maths and the more 'formal' areas of English, such as phonics, spelling, punctuation and grammar). Wherever possible, however, the school embraces a 'topic' approach to pedagogy in which different curriculum areas are linked together around a particular theme and learning is contextualised.

Each class takes part in aspects of Enquiry Based Learning (EBL). In this form of pedagogy, children take part, as a group, in an enterprise or problem-solving task. They take on roles within the group, researching a solution to the problem posed or task given. EBL may take as little time as a week or may last much longer, depending on the age and aptitude of the children involved.

Curriculum leadership

Each curriculum area is led by a Curriculum Leader who is responsible for developing policies and schemes of work, giving advice to colleagues, maintaining resources and keeping abreast of current developments in this field through individual research or by attending Continuing Professional Development

courses. Curriculum leaders maintain effective communication with Link Governors, briefing them as appropriate and arranging monitoring visits to school. As we believe strongly that our children's learning is best served through an effective home-school partnership, Curriculum Leaders occasionally organise parent workshops and presentations to explain new initiatives.

Equity and Inclusion

Our curriculum provision forms a major component of all children's entitlement to a broad and balanced education. We are committed to providing a teaching environment conducive to learning. Each child is valued, respected and challenged with regard to ability, race, gender, religion, social background, culture or disability. All children in school have access to an appropriate learning experience and teaching style. Differing abilities (including SEND and Gifted and Talented children), aptitudes and individual needs (cognitive, social, physical and emotional) are met in a variety of ways. Differentiation of provision is achieved through varying tasks and/ or targets, varying the degree of support or challenge offered by adults for individuals or groups and the expectation of different outcomes. In this way, our curriculum provision is personalised for each child.

Our school is an active member of TANGO - the local delivery group for Gifted and Talented provision. We select children to attend a wide variety of Saturday activities held at other schools. White Notley is the only school that provides such activities for Key Stage 1.