

Curriculum Policy



Thorn Grove Primary School

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<i>L. Vose</i> Headteacher	<i>C. Alcock</i> Chair of Governors
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Curriculum Policy

At Thorn Grove Primary School, our curriculum is derived from the National Curriculum for Key Stages 1 & 2 and the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage and Development Matters in our EYFS setting.

Our broad well-planned inclusive curriculum, combined with high quality teaching, supports children's development and helps nurture versatile, considerate young people, who have a genuine thirst for learning. Our pupils are encouraged to embrace challenges, develop a Growth Mindset and adopt a strong sense of moral purpose founded in respect for and understanding of people and the local community.

Introduction

The curriculum consists of all the planned activities that we as a school organize in order to promote learning, personal growth and development. It includes, not only the formal requirements of the National Curriculum, but also the range of extra-curricular activities that the school organizes in order to enrich the experiences of our children. It also includes the 'hidden curriculum', or what the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. We endeavour to cultivate children's knowledge, skills and attitudes to learning in all areas whilst also teaching children how to grow into positive, resilient and responsible people, who can work and cooperate with others in order to achieve their true potential.

Values

At Thorn Grove we support a Growth Mindset culture and firmly believe that achievement and attainment are not predetermined or 'fixed'. With this in mind, we understand that making learning enjoyable, meaningful and relevant gives all children the best possible chance to develop new skills, knowledge and make progress. We offer all children an excellent education in a safe, inclusive, creative and stimulating environment inside and outside the classroom. The school fosters an environment in which we encourage pupils, staff and the community to be creative, unique, open-minded, independent and respectful of themselves and others in our community and the wider world. We take our responsibility to prepare children for life in modern Britain very seriously and ensure that the fundamental British Values are introduced, discussed and lived out through the ethos and work of our school.

Our inclusive curriculum promotes respect for the views of each individual child, as well as for people of all cultures. We value the spiritual and moral development of each person, as well as their intellectual and physical growth. We organize our curriculum so that we promote cooperation and understanding between all members of our community. We are fortunate at Thorn Grove to have a spacious learning environment. This is respected and used by all in school and we aim, through our curriculum, to teach respect for our world, and how we should care for it for future generations, as well as our own.

At Thorn Grove our values infuse all areas of school life and are reflected by the schools simple motto: ***Aim high, succeed and fly***

Aims

At Thorn Grove, our balanced, broad and creative curriculum will:

- Give children real life skills that enable them to go out into the world
- Be focussed on our local area and community
- Be Inspirational and engaging
- Provide exposure to opportunities that develop skills and knowledge that can be transferred to a range of situations
- Grow life-long learners
- Teach children how to learn through the development of keen, enquiring minds
- Give children the opportunity to be creative
- Help children develop physically and learn how being active and healthy can be beneficial.

The Curriculum at Thorn Grove

Children within Years 1-6 follow the National Curriculum for the teaching of English and Maths. Mastery over language and mathematics empowers children to communicate, calculate, solve problems and be creative, imaginative and logical, as well as allowing them engagement with the world at large.

Curriculum planning

Our curriculum is the heart of learning. It is driven by skills which will make our children effective readers, writers and mathematicians and will enable them to progress effortlessly to High School. Each year group's teaching is underpinned by a geography or history enquiry based unit. We use this as a base on which other foundation subjects revolve and the curriculum contains links across curriculum areas where appropriate. Additionally, English and Maths are interwoven through the curriculum via the use of high quality texts and exploration of mathematical skills in all subject areas to support confidence in basic skills. Having the curriculum shaped in this way also enables us to embed writing opportunities and experiences through all curriculum areas.

We aim to bring each focus to life by immersing pupils in the topic (prior to beginning the learning), understanding what they already know and developing an idea of what they would like to discover. This provides teachers with a positive platform upon which to plan engaging and effective learning and enquiries and develop experiences for all. An overview of our history and geography units and year group curriculum content can be found within this section of our website.

In order to ensure that our curriculum is broad and balanced we have developed termly focuses alongside in-depth medium term planning which guides our short term planning. This allows us to link skills and develop knowledge as well as ensuring we are providing rich and varied learning opportunities through both discrete and cross curricular pathways.

Our curriculum documents enable teachers to plan and develop skills which lead to the achievement of statutory National Curriculum objectives over a term. Skills and knowledge are taught, embedded and then applied across the curriculum and throughout learning. Staff are expected to plan in accordance with this document and adapt teaching and learning to meet the needs of all groups and abilities.

At the end of each unit a review of learning is undertaken. Pupils may be asked to: deliver information they have gathered; state their most enjoyable moments; reflect on how they learnt best and what they would like to do again. Staff discussions related to improvements in learning also take place and the feedback is used the next time the unit is delivered to improve units. Teaching staff assess the children against the learning objectives but also against the key skills and knowledge criteria targeted in the unit.

English

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening skills are developed as an integral part of our learning in all subjects. Through all our work, we ensure that children's vocabulary is developed.

Talk Partners, a system which is used in each class through school, enables children to practice talk and dialogue for learning. We use drama (DEAL and role play) to explore different types of talk and our 'Talk for Writing' curriculum (explained below) involves children in learning and retelling stories as well as developing in-depth knowledge of fiction and non-fiction writing.

Speaking and Listening is at the forefront of everything we do, from taking the register to whole school discussions in assembly. We aim to continually maximize the opportunities to develop this skill across the entire curriculum.

Reading

Reading at school begins with Read Write Inc. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage One follow the programme daily. This program continues into KS2 for those pupils that require additional phonics based support.

All children are supported in their reading development by guided reading sessions which take place on a daily basis. Banded books are carefully matched to ability levels and children work in groups with an adult, reading, responding and discussing. Follow up tasks are created and pupils are also required to demonstrate their knowledge independently.

Reading is a focus throughout school. High quality texts and writing are shared with children and each class will absorb high quality novels through our reading spine and protected 'class read time'.

Regular discussion surrounding reading takes place so that we can discover what makes texts exciting and how exceptional writing stirs different emotions and why reading is enjoyable.

Pupils also work to decode, read quality examples and are taught skills including skimming, scanning, inference, deduction as well as an appreciation of theme and character development. Reading is an essential life skill and consequently is a part of every lesson.

Reading for pleasure is valued extremely highly by the school and this means that reading is not limited to the classroom. Pupils have access to excellent home readers as well as; online reading schemes (Bug Club) and a well-stocked library complete with varied fiction and non fiction titles. We further encourage reading through reading events (World Book Day and Book Fairs).

Children choose a 'reading for pleasure' book alongside their banded book, and are encouraged to share these with their families for enjoyment.

Staff at Thorn Grove are passionate about the importance of reading and therefore each classroom has a well-stocked reading corner which enables children to continually develop a love of books and the life-long skill of reading.

Writing

The journey of writing begins the moment a child enters Thorn Grove in the early years foundation stage. We strive to provide all children with opportunities to explore mark making and early writing skills. Pupils progress to experiencing and developing writing through Read, Write Inc as well as developing their writing skills through a tailored programme of development. This includes 'Talk for Writing' our whole school approach to writing. The stages of this process are outlined below:

'Talk for Writing'

Each unit starts with a 'Have a Go' task where the children write a piece of writing based on the text genre to be taught. Following that, class targets are set, linked to any misconceptions or the toolkit to be taught and the planned unit of work is delivered.

There are three key phases in this approach. The first, Imitation, supports children to develop familiarity with quality texts through reading as a reader as well as reading as a writer. During this stage, texts will be shared with the children and they will learn to recite the text accurately with the use of story maps and boxing up as a planning tool, in order to help them internalise the patterns of language involved. Every lesson starts with Warm Up Words that develop skills from grammar, spelling and class toolkits. Children from Year 2 onwards have magpie books where they create word

banks that support their development of vocabulary.

In phase two, Innovation, the children will use the class toolkits alongside other resources to modify the model text and start to independently experiment with text structure and composition. The children will write regularly during this phase and feedback will be given to help them improve.

In phase three, Independent Application (Show What You Know), the children will be given the opportunity to write their own version of the text being studied. They will do this independently by recalling the tools and teaching from the previous two phases.

In addition to this, the children will be given the chance to 'invent' during each term. This is where the children can choose their own style and type of writing for a given stimulus.

During the 'Talk for Writing' process the children will be involved in shared, guided and independent writing at different stages based on their confidence with the text types and toolkits

The school environment celebrates writing through displays and encourages publication of work. All classrooms should have an English Working Wall, which is linked to the current unit of work. Further opportunities for writing are planned for, and can be seen, throughout the curriculum.

As a school, we have a focus on vocabulary and the importance of enriching our children's vocabulary. Staff focus on Tier 2 vocabulary from our model texts (2-5 words depending on age and stage) and specifically teach it to the children, so they are confident to use it in their own writing. This is crucial to giving the children the opportunity and access to language they may not come across in their everyday conversations.

Mathematics

Our core purpose in Mathematics is to promote fluency and support pupils in their development of their ability to reason and problem solve in all areas. We follow the White Rose Maths framework to ensure we promote coverage across all strands and use formative assessment in each lesson to differentiate teachings. We place high value on confidence as a key driver to success and continually strive to develop pupils' understanding and independence as mathematicians.

We place a strong emphasis on the development of basic Maths skills (for example learning division and multiplication facts up to 12 x 12 by year four) and we ask parents to support with homework practise to ensure that children have instant recall of these facts which they will need for more advanced problem solving. At home, pupils can access Deepening Understanding, Discover My Maths and Times Tables Rock Stars to consolidate key skills.

Science

We have carefully followed the statutory National Curriculum documentation to ensure continuity and progression in our science teaching from EYFS to year 6. Children regularly work scientifically and learn the skills of being a scientist. They focus on the five main areas of enquiry through planning, carrying out and evaluating regular investigations as well as learning about the important science concepts and knowledge. We believe that Science should be experienced and our planning allows pupils to experience science through exciting and inspiring learning opportunities, where possible linked to the current theme.

History and Geography

As referred to above, History and Geography provide a framework for our broader curriculum and act as a hub which can provide links to many of our foundation subjects (where appropriate) and enable valid connections to be made. History is taught chronologically through the year groups and geography is developed in sequence to enhance the progression of skills and knowledge as pupils become older. In these subject areas, we follow an enquiry approach: each unit has an overarching enquiry question and the aim for the pupils is to ultimately gain the skills and knowledge to answer this key question in detail. The pathway of learning in these subjects is formed through a series of well designed 'key questions' that support the children through their enquiry journey.

Computing

Computing is an integral part of learning in school. It is not a one hour a week session in the computer suite, but a learning tool used to develop knowledge throughout the curriculum. However, computing skills are held in high regard and the school has a strong focus on delivering discrete weekly sessions based on a recognised computing scheme of work (Rising Stars 'Switched On'). Nevertheless, the staff are encouraged to be flexible in their delivery of these units to account for changes in software that may develop stronger skills and awareness in this area. This approach enables teachers to effectively plan and develop units of work which: link creatively to themes across the curriculum; promote safe and responsible online use; and develop and provide our learners with the robust skills for the future. We have sets of Chrome books and Ipads to support learning and develop skills in this area.

Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural

Weekly lessons explore feelings, social situations and aspirations. We aim to support teaching in this area through a 'circles' approach alongside more regular lesson structures. Using the PSHE Association spiral curriculum, the areas covered in each year group are mapped carefully and there is excellent coverage of the three main areas of: Health and Wellbeing, Relationships and Living in the Wider World. Sex and Relationships Education is taught as part of our PSHE lessons. We are always happy to discuss and share with parents the materials we use for this area of the curriculum and parents are notified in advance when this area of the curriculum is due to be taught.

MFL

Languages are taught in KS2. Children currently learn French. We aim for pupils to develop conversational skills in addition to recognising and using the written word through regular reading opportunities. Practical activities are used to drive the learning of skills in taught sessions which are then reinforced through additional bursts throughout the week where appropriate.

Art/Design Technology

We feel that it is important for pupils at Thorn Grove to have an outlet to express themselves creatively, therefore our curriculum plans include units in both art and design technology. These units, where possible, link through to the main history and geography units. In art we use a progression grid to identify the main skills that need to be covered in each year group and children practice the skills and produce final pieces to display their competency. In Design Technology, pupils develop the skills to be able to research, plan, produce and evaluate products which are purposeful and have real life applications. The curriculum in this area is progressive, with the skills and knowledge being taught building on and combining, but not directly repeating the skills and knowledge previously experienced.

Music

At Thorn Grove, we understand the importance of teaching children the skills needed to effectively appraise, compose and perform effectively. We use a recognised scheme (Kapow) to develop a deeper understanding of the musical vocabulary, composition and elements across the primary age ranges. We provide children with both vocal and instrumental opportunities, focusing on a range of musical styles from EYFS to Y6.

PE and Sport

We understand the importance for children to develop fundamental movement skills and physical literacy and plan two, hour long, PE sessions a week. In addition to this, we use outdoor learning and organise extracurricular clubs as a vehicle to help the children further develop skills. We place a premium on cooperative work and the development of social skills and work very hard to provide the children with the opportunity to engage in non-competitive and competitive sport to help them experience different environments in which to evolve these skills.

Teaching and Learning Styles

We use a variety of teaching styles. Lessons are tailored to ensure that the intended learning outcomes are achieved over time and this is completed in numerous ways eg: An introduction with whole class teaching, using open ended probing questions, visual stimuli and talk partners; split teaching, student led research, challenge by choice. All lessons involve a period of time where children are required to work independently or as part of a group.

Enhancing the curriculum

From Nursery through to Year 6 opportunities will be taken to extend the curriculum beyond the statutory requirements through:

- Visitors, including artists, craftspeople, actors, musicians
- The use of the school grounds, the locality and the wider environment
- Educational visits
- Support of parents
- Theatre groups which provide performances
- Extra-curricular clubs and partnerships with sports providers in the local community

Many of these activities will embrace the cultural diversity of the community and the society in which we live and enhance the aesthetic environment of the school.

This curriculum policy is the overarching document that provides information on our curriculum ethos and more detailed information for specific subjects can be found in the our subject specific policies.