

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School



Curriculum Policy

September 2020
Review date: September 2023



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

We strive for excellence within a caring and diverse community, nurturing the Catholic faith, respecting each other living, working and growing together as part of God's family.

1. Introduction

This policy details St Patrick's curriculum. It incorporates the views of parents, staff and children and the directions and guidance from central government, Brentwood Diocese and the school's governing body. The policy specifies the way in which the Headteacher, teaching and non-teaching staff intend to deliver the curriculum.

The curriculum encompasses all skills and knowledge that we organise through planned activities in order to promote learning and personal growth and development. It includes and goes beyond the formal requirements of the National Curriculum by offering a wide range of enriching experiences for all children. It is wrapped into our belief of 'growing the whole person' for life - what the children learn from the way they are treated and how they are expected to live their lives. We aim to teach children how to grow into positive, responsible people, who can work and co-operate with others while developing knowledge and skills, so that they achieve their true potential.

2. Values

2.1 Our school curriculum is underpinned by the values that we hold dear at our school. The curriculum is the means by which the school achieves its objective of educating children in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to lead fulfilling lives.

2.2 St Patrick's is a school that is built on Christian foundations and a living connection with and support for the local and wider community. We always seek to express our Catholic faith and ethos in practical ways that make a positive difference to all of God's creations. Although there is a diversity of belief and emphasis within our existing school community, we expect everyone at St Patrick's to understand, support, work and live out the values we promote. By values we mean descriptions of the way in which we expect every member of the school, adults and children, to act through life. St Patrick's ASPIRE values are: achieve, support, pride, inspire, respect, empower.

2.3 We believe that good education allows the individuality of each child to shine through while developing literate, numerate, creative and technologically-skilled young people, with resilience, flexibility, self-discipline and the desire to do everything to the best of their ability.

When children leave our school they should have the academic skills to fully benefit from secondary education - 'be secondary ready' - and have the aspirations to move on into further education or any career of their choice. However, an education which roots life in the values of Jesus Christ – 'love one another as I have loved you'- is what will most radically transform the quality of life of those children as adults and thus of society as a whole. At St Patrick's our curriculum is rooted in Christ and his teachings. The emphasis on each child being unique and loved by God is what shapes the school's Catholic ethos and gives the context for our curriculum. Staff in all areas of the organisation share this vision and contribute and support its implementation, with the close involvement of parents, governors, the parish and the diocese of Brentwood.

2.4 As a school, we also promote and incorporate into our curriculum the set of British Values: democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty; mutual respect; tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

2.5 These beliefs and values permeate through every interaction in school and outside. Everyone is expected to uphold, model and promote them. Alongside our mission statement, they direct our policies and practice.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aim of our curriculum is for pupils to have the requisite skills to be successful, responsible, independent and motivated life-long learners. It is achieved through the holistic approach to the academic, religious, emotional, artistic, social and physical developments of children embedded into the meaningful context of learning. With this in mind, we offer a broad and balanced curriculum which encompasses academic subjects, sports, arts and personal, social, health and economic education taught primarily through topics.

The curriculum sets the foundations for our pupils upon which they will build their next stage of education. Learning, working and living at St Patrick's are centred on the teachings of Christ which are shared, imparted and practised in school, church and the families. This includes the respect and care that our children and staff show for one another, the environment and the community around us. The school works closely with the families and the parish in bringing up and educating children to become responsible and caring citizens who respect the rule of law, protect the environment and live their lives according to the values and morals promoted by the Catholic Church and the school.

3.0 Organisation and planning

3.1 We plan and teach in a cross-curricular way through topics and key texts. We agree a long-term plan for each year group, based on the skills and knowledge outlined in the curriculum. Clear objectives are taught in each half term. For some subjects, we have schemes of work to support this process. Some very specific objectives, that do not lend themselves into the topics, are taught through discrete subject lessons. We review our long-term plan on an annual basis.

3.2 Our short-term plans are the lessons that our teachers write on a weekly or daily basis. We use these to set out the learning outcomes and the success criteria for each session; teachers also identify what resources and differentiated activities they are going to use in each lesson.

4.0 The Early Years Foundation Stage

4.1 The curriculum that we teach in the Reception and Nursery classes meets and exceeds the requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Our curriculum planning focuses on the Early Learning Goals and on developing children's skills and experiences. In the Foundation Stage, we adopt an inter-disciplinary topic approach to curriculum planning. We plan the curriculum carefully, so that there is coherence and full coverage of all aspects of the National Curriculum and early learning goals, and there is planned progression in all curriculum areas.

5.0 Children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

The curriculum in our school is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend the school. We adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of individual SEND children when necessary. Please refer to the school SEND policy on the school website for the school's approach to ensuring each child fulfils their potential. Each class teacher is responsible for every child in their class and ensures that all lessons in all subjects in the curriculum are differentiated to meet the specific needs of individual children, so that every pupil can learn and make progress in every lesson.

6. The National and local contexts

6.1 The outline of our curriculum, by subject and academic year, can be found on our school Website.¹ It includes all statutory elements of the National Curriculum 2013, including the skills and objectives for maths and English².

6.2 While central government provides the statutory element of the national curriculum that we must teach, its policy guidance also states, *"The school curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that each school plans for its pupils. The national curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to range beyond the national curriculum specifications. The national curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum."*³ As a school, we use this considerable freedom and shape the curriculum to suit the needs and priorities of our Catholic community making it responsive to the interests and aspirations of our pupils.

7. Curriculum Areas

At St Patrick's, we have incorporated the national curriculum subjects with other similar skills and mastery areas, creating four areas of learning. We have also included other skills areas which we consider vital to the education of our children in the modern world.

In Early Years and Foundation Stage, St Patrick's curriculum consists of prime and specific areas of learning. In Years 1 to 6, five distinct groups of curriculum areas comprise a range of subjects designed to offer broad and balanced learning experiences to our pupils.

¹ <http://www.st-patricks.waltham.sch.uk/>

² The national curriculum in England Key stages 1 and 2 framework document September 2013

³ Para. 3.2. National Curriculum September 2013

Religious, Personal and Social Development

- Religious Education
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
- Physical Education

Language and Communications

- Reading
- Writing
- Phonics
- Vocabulary, Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation
- Oracy
- Modern Foreign Language

Creative Arts

- Arts and Design
- Music
- Design and Technology

Understanding the

World

- Science
- History
- Geography
- Technology
- Computing and Media

Mathematics

- Number
- Measurement
- Geometry
- Statistics
- Algebra

Early Years Foundation Stage

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal social and emotional development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

8. Subject Leadership

8.1 We expect that all expert teachers will lead a subject area, taking responsibility for ensuring resources are available, assisting SLT and Phase Leaders in monitoring standards, attainment and progress in their subject and keeping abreast of developments in their subject. Less experienced teachers have an opportunity to lead subject areas supported by an experienced mentor.

8.2. Subject leaders regularly meet with allocated link governors to ensure that the governing body is fully aware of standards in all areas of the curriculum.

8.3 Subject leaders are expected to suggest trips and other enrichment activities for their subject area.

9. Enrichment activities

9.1 An important part of our curriculum at St Patrick's are the enrichment activities which teachers are expected to provide for the children - two each half-term. These are well funded in the budget set by governors and are also planned to make use of the wonderful resources in London, accessible for free using the Transport for London free school travel provision. This may include trips to museums in Central London (e.g. Museum of London, British Museum, Imperial War Museum, Vestry House Museum, St Paul's), visitors coming to the school (fire brigade, people of other faiths, Caritas Anchor House, CAFOD, Lepra), Theme Days (e.g. Puzzle Day (Maths), Poetry Slam with a visiting published Poet), special theme weeks: Anti-Bullying week, Shakespeare Week and other kinds of events (Recycling project, Bikeability team and Cycling Proficiency).

9.2 Pupils are also involved in fund-raising and charitable activities to develop their good citizenship skills and also in response to Catholic social teaching – that it is by our actions that people will know we are Christians.

10. Pupil and Parent Voice

10.1 Pupils are asked for feedback on the curriculum and an evaluation of their experiences. We look for activities and approaches that the children have found particularly inspiring and which might be used more widely. The School Council is asked to discuss with their classes ideas for future learning and where possible these ideas are incorporated into future plans.

11. Extra-curricular activities

We provide clubs at lunch time (e.g. sports, creative writing) and using external providers, after-school (e.g. Drama, Coding and Sports).

12. Use of Government funding

12.1 We continue to make effective use of the extra money given for developing PE and physical activity.

12.2 We continue to look for ways of widening our curriculum offer to our children, especially those whose parents are not in the financial position to give them many of the experiences other children take for granted. Pupil premium funding is used primarily to fund additional teaching staff to help children perform better academically (bridging the attainment gap). However we have also used it to widen the life experiences of children and enrich their curriculum offer. For example, funding drama workshops in holidays, paying for music tuition and individual drama clubs and sports clubs, funding theatres trips and so on. We will continue to look for these opportunities.

13. Other

Other specific curriculum policies and documents, for instance Curriculum Book or RE policy, can be found on the school website under Curriculum.

The school is committed to ensuring that teachers and support staff have the resources, and the knowledge to effectively deliver the more demanding curriculum. Staff skills are regularly audited and appropriate CPD will be provided for them where needed.