



St. Aidan's Catholic Primary School - Principles of our Curriculum

'When I leave St. Aidan's, I will be a confident, independent and resilient learner who has built strong foundations in learning for the next stage of my schooling and an understanding of how I can affect the world around me...'

At St. Aidan's, we believe 'Our Curriculum' has to be designed to meet the specific needs of our community and context. It must equip all of our children – regardless of their needs – with the tools they need to be successful in our school and beyond, preparing them for the next stage of the education and life beyond. In order to make 'Our Curriculum' as relevant as possible to our pupils, it has been designed around five principles. Our Curriculum: -

- Is discipline distinctive
- Is progressive
- Recaps substantive knowledge regularly
- Individually challenging and bespoke
- Enriching

Discipline Distinctive

Our subjects are studied discretely in a specified session each week and term and following a well-designed scheme of work. Teachers make it clear to the children 'what' they are studying and 'why' they are studying it. A learning journey takes the children through each unit of work, making clear what skills the children will assimilate and how they will apply these skills. In each subject area children are immersed in the knowledge, vocabulary and skills which they need to be successful learners; they are taught to think like scientists, think like geographers, think like artists. We understand that being critical thinkers in maths and art are two different skills, and this approach supports children to apply their learning in each distinct area.

Progressive

The curriculum is progressive across the school and through year groups, supported by a bridging document from EYFS to KS1 for each subject area. In each subject, substantive knowledge from previous years groups is built upon. Children add to build on already learnt skills apply these to new areas of learning. Each piece of new learning in each subject feeds into another area later in school life where this will be reinforced and applied. Our curriculum focuses on learning by doing; ensuring our children learn by experiences they have in our school. We strive to ensure that pupils rely on understanding of concepts instead of rote learning, that they actually grasp the meaning of things being taught to them as opposed to their blind acceptance of information.

Recapping of Substantive Knowledge

Revisiting and recapping substantive knowledge is a key aspect to our curriculum design. Regular purposeful practice of what has previously been taught helps consolidate material and helps pupils remember what they have learned. Requiring pupils to retrieve information from memory, and spacing practice so that pupils revisit ideas after a gap are also strengthen recall. As part of our approach to teaching and learning across school, teachers

build in sessions of recall and retrieval practice daily into their teaching to ensure that children regularly revisit previously taught material and support it being embedded into their long-term memory.

Teacher assessment is also used at the beginning of each new topic to revisit any previously taught material which the children may have forgotten. This then feeds into the planning of each Learning Journey in all subjects to ensure that any gaps in knowledge from prior learning which may affect the children's ability to learn can be revisited. Planning each new topic in this way ensures that children are more adequately equipped to approach and new material and supports them in making connections in their learning.

Individually challenging and bespoke

Our goal at St. Aidan's is that all children develop into independent thinkers who have a love for learning. We hope that all children leave our school with a desire for knowledge and a capacity to learn which equips them for the rest of their lives. To achieve this, we aim to create an environment where children receive the appropriate level of challenge which supports the development of resilience and makes them value the success they feel when achieving something new.

Our approach to teaching and learning also gives a high emphasis to how teachers provide scaffolding to children of all abilities. We have high expectations of what all of our children will achieve and teaching staff aim to provide the right amount of support and scaffolding to help all children achieve what they are capable of, rather than lowering our expectations.

Enriching

What the children learn in our school must be contextual and linked to their specific circumstances and the circumstance of our community. Wherever possible, enriching activities will be planned to support children in how their learning within our school supports their ability to shape the world around them. Our aim is that children leave with the skills and knowledge to make a difference in their world but also the ambition to do so; knowing that they can influence and play a role in modern society.

Our curriculum enrichment will focus on giving children experiences which nurture them in their ability to do this.

Following consultation with our parents regarding which qualities – beyond the taught curriculum in the classroom – they would like their children to assimilate in their time here, we have chosen:

Teamwork Confidence Resilience Independence Leadership

Alongside our personal development characteristics are 5 values taken from the gospel that link to our School Mission statement:

'In the Love and Truth of Jesus we grow.'

Respect Honesty Tolerance Forgiveness Courage

Different values are focussed on in each term and we relate these to the children through prayer times, assemblies, collective worship and liturgies. Our curriculum is also designed to share with the children significant people who embody all of the values we wish to instil in them.