

## CURRICULUM POLICY 2019

### Overview Statement

This policy sets out the school's aims, principles and procedures for the delivery of the curriculum at Finstall First School. It reflects the values and philosophy of Finstall First School and it gives a framework and rationale for staff, both teaching and non-teaching. This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the schemes of work for each subject that give details about what pupils in each age group will learn.

### PRINCIPLES

Finstall First School seeks to support their pupils by offering a curriculum that is broad, balanced, relevant and appropriate to the pupils' ages, abilities and aptitudes. Finstall First School values its freedom to make decisions relating to the curriculum, utilising the 2014 National Curriculum, the professionalism of its staff and good educational practice to inform its decisions.

Our curriculum includes what is taught through School Assemblies, the various extra-curricular activities that are organised in order to enrich the children's experience as well as what the children learn from the way they are treated and how they are expected to behave. Our curriculum also includes all the planned activities that we organise in order to promote learning and that enable personal growth and development. We want children to grow into positive, confident, independent, responsible people who can work and co-operate with others while, at the same time, developing the knowledge and skills that will enable them to achieve their full potential. Accordingly, Finstall First School provides an educational environment which is caring, friendly, well-structured, positive and academically challenging to each individual pupil.

The main purpose of our Curriculum is to prepare children for life and to help them to learn.

"Learning can be defined as an alteration in long-term memory. If nothing has altered in long-term memory, nothing has been learned. In order to develop understanding, pupils connect new knowledge with existing knowledge. Pupils also need to develop fluency and unconsciously apply their knowledge as skills. **This must not be reduced to, or confused with, simply memorising facts.**" (Draft Ofsted School Inspection Handbook, January 2019)

We acknowledge that, particularly in the early years of a child's School life, a strong focus must be placed on teaching children to read. "If pupils are not able to read to an age-appropriate level and fluency, they will be incapable of accessing the rest of the curriculum, and they will rapidly fall behind their peers." ("Ofsted Draft Inspection Handbook" January 2019)

### AIMS

We continually strive to achieve our Vision Statement, "We Care, We Share, We Learn and Achieve," by aiming

- To provide a broad, balanced, stimulating curriculum in which all progress is recognised, developed and celebrated.
- To recognise, accommodate and support the needs of all individuals.
- To provide an open school that promotes health and well-being and continually develops effective partnerships with parents and the wider community.
- To provide access to high quality professional development in order to keep abreast of, and assist in the implementation of, new initiatives.
- To make school fun for everybody.

By striving to achieve our aims, we hope to realise our Vision.

Through the design of our curriculum, we aim to:

- develop our children's skills and abilities, particularly in **Reading** but also in Writing and Maths, so that they can access, and apply these skills in, all areas of the National Curriculum
- help our children to become more independent and able to organise themselves
- help our children to become more self-confident, resilient and determined to succeed and less worried about getting things wrong so they are willing to "have a go" and take risks with their learning
- develop our children's knowledge of how to keep themselves safe from a variety of risks and dangers
- help our children to become good communicators, have good social skills and be kind, caring and empathetic
- develop our children's creative skills and their ability to think, solve problems and reflect

- provide our pupils with opportunities to learn about people and children who are different to them. We are also looking to provide them with opportunities to meet and / or communicate with children who are different to them. This could be because they come from different cultural, socio-economic or religious backgrounds or because they have Special Educational Needs
- help our children to respect and appreciate what they have and understand that many more people are much less fortunate
- help our children to be healthy, both physically and mentally, and understand why this is so important and how it can be achieved
- provide regular opportunities for re-capping what they have been taught already to embed prior learning (partly by identifying some topics that can be taught on a continuous basis e.g. Time)

Ultimately, by achieving the above, we are endeavouring to ensure that our children achieve extremely positive outcomes, demonstrated in statutory assessments in Reading, Writing and Maths, and are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for life in Modern Britain. We believe that our broad, rich curriculum, which provides our children with stimulating experiences and enjoyment, promotes positive outcomes in both core and foundation subjects.

### **HOW WILL OUR PUPILS LEARN?**

Our pupils will learn through:

- effective teaching and learning activities
- practical first-hand experience (including Educational Visits and Visiting speakers and animateurs)
- the example of those around them
- practice and reinforcement
- the use of books, artefacts and other sources
- the use of technology such as the internet
- their own independent study
- the shared values of home, community and school

We believe that the children in our care should be helped to achieve the maximum level of progress of which they are capable. Accordingly, we are striving to develop:

- a curriculum that is responsive to the varying needs of the children in our care
- a curriculum that will challenge **all** children and allow them to progress as far as possible and achieve success
- a curriculum that will extend natural abilities and help overcome specific difficulties
- a curriculum that will prepare children for life in the rapidly changing world in which we live.

Caring and Sharing:

Experience has taught us that children learn best when they are happy and secure. By thoughtful display of the children's work and by placing emphasis on the quality of the learning environment, we aim to provide bright and stimulating surroundings in which developing minds can grow. We work to maintain a feeling of security and trust within our school. We encourage a shared responsibility and a sense of community by sharing our work in assemblies and working together to develop and care for the school environment.

Wherever possible we believe learning should be fun!

### **WHAT ARE THE CHILDREN TAUGHT**

Our school curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that we plan for our pupils.

#### **EYFS**

Children in Reception follow the Early Years curriculum, laid out in "The Early Years Foundation Stage." At this stage, much emphasis is placed on child initiated learning with staff providing rigorous guidance to encourage and further extend the children's learning, more often through their play. During the course of this first year in school, the children focus on the following areas of learning:

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

## **EYFS Curriculum Design**

- There is daily adult led learning, by ability group, in English (initially phonics, which would include writing in each session) and Maths.
- Continuous provision is planned on a weekly basis, with the opportunity to change activities after 3 – 4 days if appropriate. The continuous provision would provide children with the opportunity to access the full breadth of areas from the EYFS curriculum.
- Some of the activities set up for continuous provision are designed to support the adult led learning in both English and Maths and children are encouraged to visit these activities by making them “Rocket Jobs,” Children are expected to complete such “Jobs” in return for movement up the Zone Board once they are completed.
- Staff work with groups of children for differentiated “Focus” activities throughout the week. All children would take part in at least one English based and one Maths based Focus activity each week, although further Focus activities may also be used to cover other areas of the curriculum should gaps in learning be identified for different groups of children.
- Children in the EYFS do not stop altogether for morning or afternoon play-time. Instead, groups of children take it in turns to access milk, snacks or to go to the toilet whilst the remainder continue with their learning through play. Children are encouraged to develop their independence through this process.
- On entry to the class room in the morning, the children start a set activity. Once the children settle into School life, this becomes a “Daily Writing task.”
- Through discussion, at the beginning of each topic, children have a say with regard to what they would specifically like to learn about.
- EYFS staff strive to obtain an appropriate balance of child-initiated play and adult led teaching, whilst ensuring that children are always able to access the full breadth of areas within the EYFS curriculum through continuous provision, set up in zoned areas.
- Children are encouraged to cooperate and collaborate and to take responsibility for their own learning – e.g. marking on a register when they have completed a task.
- Children are encouraged to make good choices with regard to how they behave and treat each other so that they learn to respect each other and each other’s property.
- The environment provided in each class and in the outside classroom is extremely stimulating and gives the children access to rich, varied and imaginative experiences, which help them to make progress towards and beyond the ELGs. In addition, an extension classroom provides an appropriate environment for more focused learning, supported by adults.
- As many of our children are particularly able and ready, our EYFS classrooms start to become a little more like Year 1 classrooms during the Summer term. This helps to prepare our children for the different curriculum and experiences that they will face in Year 1.

## **Assessment in the EYFS**

- A very thorough provisional baseline assessment, concentrating on English and Maths skills, is completed within 3 weeks of children starting School, EYFS staff meet with parents to discuss this so that parents get the opportunity to contribute to this initial assessment.
- Parents receive regular e-mails providing them with information about what their child has achieved / is working on within the curriculum.
- A very thorough assessment of each child’s progress through the EYFS is sent home in January, prior to parents’ consultations.
- At the end of the year, parents are provided with a full end of EYFS assessment report. Thus, parents are kept very well informed about their children’s progress.
- Parents are encouraged to support their children’s learning and development at home although most of our parents are already very proactive in relation to this area.
- All adults working in EYFS contribute to the assessment process. Observations and evidence can be recorded on the staff I-Pads, which link directly to the Target Tracker Assessment system. This system enables staff to easily identify gaps in learning for individuals or groups so that appropriate targeted support and interventions can be implemented and gaps narrowed. Planning is clear and thorough and is informed by the assessment information gathered on the Target Tracker system.

## **YEARS 1 – 4**

From Year 1 onwards, the children follow “The 2014 National Curriculum,” which comprises the following subjects:

English  
Maths  
Science  
Computing  
History  
Geography  
Design and Technology  
Art and Design  
Music  
PE

Children are also taught:

Religious Education (following a locally agreed syllabus provided by the Worcestershire Diocesan Board of Education)  
Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education and Citizenship (including Sex and Relationships Education in Year 4)

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, British Values and Protective behaviours**

At Finstall First School, SMSC and British Values are taught throughout the curriculum, in PSHEE and in our Assembly time. The school supports the right of all to freedom from discrimination and commits itself to a comprehensive policy of equal opportunity. The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, Individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are at the heart of this policy and of the School’s ethos.

It is part of the schools’ ethos to respect and value each person as an individual human being, each with their own gifts and challenges. The school recognises the 9 protected characteristics as detailed in the Equality Act 2010 and is opposed to all forms of discrimination both direct and indirect against any person or group of people on the grounds of race, sex, gender reassignment, religion or belief (including lack of belief), disability, age, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity and sexual orientation.

The children are also taught, at an age appropriate level, about how they can protect themselves from a variety of risks. These range from simple dangers that they might come across in Forest School in Year R to extremism and radicalisation.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, British Values and Protective behaviours (at an age-appropriate level) are taught in all year groups, through School Assemblies and also, more discretely, within our Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education lessons.

### **POSITIVE ATTITUDES**

Throughout their time in school, children will be encouraged to develop positive attitudes towards:

- learning
- our local community
- themselves and each other
- equal opportunities
- people and communities with diverse educational, religious and cultural backgrounds.

### **BASIC SKILLS**

Whilst ensuring that we maintain the broad and balanced curriculum outlined above, we also believe that young children should be given a firm grounding in those basic skills most needed for their future education and adult life.

The following skills have been identified as key skills in Finstall First School’s curriculum:

- Communication (spoken language and listening)
- English (reading and writing)
- Mathematics
- Effective and safe use of technology
- Working independently and with others
- Improving one’s own learning and performance
- Application of thinking skills and the development of natural curiosity through investigation of the world around them
- Problem-solving.

Teachers in all subject areas seek to develop these skills in children because we believe that they need to make good progress in these areas if we are to maximise their levels of achievement in other areas.

## **THEMATIC LEARNING**

Where appropriate, a number of subject areas are taught simultaneously under thematic headings or topics. Knowledge is drawn together and cross-referenced to enhance interest and understanding. As a result, the Curriculum Plan for each year group comprises a series of carefully selected study units. Each study unit has a clearly identifiable subject focus, which is also used to reinforce and support learning in other areas of the curriculum. The curriculum plan outlines the work to be covered in each year.

## **EDUCATIONAL VISITS / EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Our delivery of the curriculum is enhanced through a programme of educational visits and extra-curricular activities, including instrumental music tuition (Keyboard, Guitar, Violin, Clarinet) and a wide range of after school clubs including:

- Football
- Dance
- Tag Rugby
- Cricket
- Athletics
- Tennis
- Gymnastics
- Basketball
- Multi-skills
- Tri Golf
- Choir
- Science
- Computing
- Minecraft
- Eco and Gardening
- Food Technology
- Art
- Design Technology

During the course of each year we also arrange visits from numerous individuals, groups and organisations, who help our curriculum to be memorable and exciting for our children. These are used to reinforce and enrich the topics that our children are studying

Year 4 - Vikings and Anglo-Saxons (Tempus Fugit); Idris Caldors (Savoy Chef)

Year 3 - Titus Flavius Lustus – Roman Gladiator / Professor McGinty (Scientist);

Year 2 - Samuel Pepys – Great Fire of London / Medieval Knights and Castles;

Year 1 - Victorian Seaside Special;

Year R - Pirates and the Deep Blue Sea

All Year Groups – Animal Lady / M and M Pantomime Show

In addition, each year group visits a theatre to watch a pantomime or a similar type of performance. Other educational visits include:

Year 4 – 3 day residential visit to Malvern Outdoor Elements; WW2 day on Severn Valley Railway; Bromsgrove Methodist Church; Bromsgrove Baptist Church

Year 3 – Black Country Museum;

Year 2 – Avoncroft Museum; British Motor Museum; Bishops Wood Environment Centre; Solihull Synagogue; St Godwald's Church

Year 1 - Lickey Hills Country Park; Umberslade Farm;

Year R – West Midlands Safari Park

Upper School also attend St Godwald's Church for a Christmas Carol Service whilst Lower School attend for an Easter Service.

## **HOW ARE THE CHILDREN TAUGHT? - OUR ORGANISATION**

The children are taught most subjects by their class teacher, ably supported by our experienced and committed team of Teaching Assistants. The children also receive some specialist teaching (E.g. Year 3 receive specialist teaching in swimming and Years 3 and 4 receive specialist teaching in French and PE). Children in Years 3 and 4 also have the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument taught by specialist peripatetic music teachers. As the children progress through the school, the focus of the curriculum is adjusted to allow older pupils an increasing variety of contexts within which to apply their correspondingly increasing skills and knowledge. Similarly, as the children increase in maturity, so greater demands are made of them in terms of their responsibility for organising themselves and the depth and variety of tasks set.

The staff endeavour to ensure that there is continuity of provision and progression in the demands made of the children as they move through the school. The school maintains close links with its feeder Pre Schools and Nurseries and also with the Middle Schools to which the children transfer at age nine.

#### **DISABILITIES / SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS / GIFTED AND TALENTED**

Those children who have special educational needs or disabilities or who show exceptional ability in certain areas can normally be catered for within the existing organisation of the school. However, there may be occasions when the class teacher feels that additional targeted support or extension work is required.

There may, on occasions, be a need to consult with parents and, with their agreement, further advice may be sought from outside agencies such as Educational Psychologists, the Learning Support Team, Speech and Language specialists, etc.

We also co-ordinate Gifted and Talented workshops, covering a wide range of activities, for pupils (mainly in Year 4), considered to be Gifted and Talented. These take place in a wide range of schools including, First, Middle and High Schools throughout the town and the surrounding areas of Bromsgrove.

#### **TRANSFER TO MIDDLE SCHOOL**

As pupils near the age of transfer to Middle School, additional activities are introduced so that the children are prepared for what they will meet at their new school. We also create opportunities for the children to meet pupils from neighbouring schools and to visit the Middle School on a regular basis during their final year with us.

#### **A FOOTNOTE ON THE CURRICULUM**

We know that education does not begin and end at school. Most of a child's formative years are spent with a caring adult / parent. In order to achieve every child's full potential, we enter into a partnership between parents, children and teachers. We strive continually to improve the quality of education provided at our school and, to this end, this Curriculum Policy and its day to day implementation is the focus of continuous review and development.

**This policy was approved by the Governing Body on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019.**

**It will be reviewed in February 2020.**

**Governor Responsible: Martin Evans**