



Providing the keys to success for every child

Whole School Policy on:

Curriculum

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Introduction

The statements below refer in the main to years 1 to 6. The Foundation stage has its own curriculum which is set out in the Early Years Policy. The School Curriculum comprises the National Curriculum and Religious Education and any other organised activity which takes place in school time.

It reflects statutory requirements including those of the National Curriculum and those of the Local Authority.

The National Curriculum subjects taught at the school are as follows:

Core Subjects:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science

Foundation Subjects:

- Information Communication Technology
- Design Technology
- Geography
- History
- Music
- Physical Education
- Art
- PSHE

Religious Education is a statutory subject. It is based on the Kent Agreed Syllabus.

Early years - The Foundation Stage

The Early Years Curriculum is based upon the seven areas of learning as follows:

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
2. Communication and Language
3. Physical Development
4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

The curriculum is a progression from that which the children will have experienced in their pre-school provision.

The reception year is a very important one for establishing good working and classroom habits and laying the foundations for future learning.

The curriculum therefore aims to do just this. The children experience a range of teacher led and child initiated learning activities.

Throughout the year there is a very obvious place for play, both structured and unstructured and using a wide range of age-appropriate apparatus.



Practical Activities and First-hand Experience

The school believes that children learn and understand best through carrying out practical activities and experiencing concepts first-hand.

The school is very well resourced and children are able to enjoy the benefits of using apparatus in a number of subjects particularly mathematics, science and technology.

Visiting speakers are a feature of many programmes of study. Trips to places of interest to enhance the study of a topic are arranged throughout the year.

The local environment is a particularly valuable resource which is used throughout the year by all age groups.

Curriculum Plans

The school recognises the importance of the children acquiring good literacy and numeracy skills. It recognises also that these skills are acquired neither easily nor quickly. The programmes must be well structured and offer both carefully planned progression and regular reinforcement and consolidation. They must offer also frequent and regular opportunities to apply the knowledge gained in a variety of contexts. The school therefore places a very strong emphasis on English and Mathematics. Together they account for a very significant part of the timetable for every year group.

Science, ICT (Information & Communications Technology) also rate as Core Subjects.

English

Also refer to School's Literacy Policy

The English programme is based very largely on the Primary Framework for Literacy .

There is a daily half-hour session of phonics linked to handwriting and daily guided reading sessions.

Work on the writing conventions, comprehension and creative writing is delivered in more sustained sessions throughout the week.

Speaking and Listening (S&L):

This is planned by the teacher on a half-termly basis. There are whole-school plans which are currently being trialled and will be reviewed and revised as appropriate. The school recognises the need for a structured S&L programme which provides progression through key features of speaking and listening.

Reading

There are two main thrusts in the teaching of reading:

- the teaching of reading through the acquisition of phonic knowledge and comprehension
- the recognition of high frequency words.

The programmes for both strands are based on those set out in the National Primary Framework for Literacy and Soundwrite activities.

The strategy for the teaching of reading progresses through the following stages:



- pre-reading skills and knowledge;
- building up a bank of high frequency sight words;
- building up a knowledge of phonics - this runs alongside the acquisition of H/F (high frequency) words.
- Decoding words using phonic knowledge.
- Comprehension and understanding.

At all stages children will use contextual and picture clues to aid them in the decoding process. This is encouraged and is regarded as important in the process of learning to read.

The Soundwrite Programme has been implemented throughout the school and now forms the basis of the teaching of decoding and encoding.

At all stages, including the pre-reading stage, we place a strong emphasis on reading for understanding. Mechanical reading or 'barking at print' has no real value to the child as a tool in the learning process.

The school's policy enables access for each child, including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN), to a wide range of reading materials, fiction and non-fiction:

- exposure to a wide range of vocabulary and writing styles;
- the opportunity for consolidation of skills and avoids too rapid a progression through a scheme such as is frequently experienced when only one or two schemes are available;
- a wide range of stories and topics to cultivate the interest of the child.

The structured reading programme is greatly enhanced by the school's provision for Guided Reading throughout the school. This strategy is very beneficial to the development of the children's reading ability including the higher order skills and to the motivation to read.

There is a growing range of other fiction material which is not colour-coded. Children have access to this resource to supplement their reading. Each class has a large number of such fiction books available to the children. There is a growing supply of fiction books in the library. The school continues to develop its bank of poetry books and plays.

The library contains a large number of books covering a wide range of topics. Children have access to the library in order to:

- develop library skills;
- use books for research purposes.

Library skills are taught as part of the curriculum.

Children are not permitted to take home any group reading books. They are encouraged and expected to take home their reading book.

Writing

The writing programme starts at the very earliest pre-writing skills and finishes with the children able to write in a variety of styles for a variety of purposes.

Developing the will to write and the love for writing is a major aim. It starts in the reception year with emergent writing and strategies to achieve the aim are deployed throughout the school.

Children are given instruction in all areas of writing. They are given frequent opportunities to write across all areas of the curriculum. A particular emphasis is placed on creative writing



and helping children to experience the joys of using and playing with language to create stories of genuine quality.

Spelling

The spelling programme starts in the reception year as soon as appropriate and continues throughout the school.

The programme is a mixture of acquiring and using phonographic knowledge to spell, learning to spell high frequency words.

Handwriting

The school has introduced (2013) a cursive style of writing to move through the school. Children are given very regular instruction and opportunities to develop their handwriting skills.

The school places strong emphasis on neatness of presentation in every respect.

Mathematics

Also refer to the School's Maths Policy and the Primary Framework for Numeracy

The National Primary Framework for Numeracy now forms the basis of maths teaching throughout the school from year 1 upwards. This is supplemented by working from published schemes but the schemes are merely a resource.

Numbers

The National Primary Framework places a great emphasis on the teaching of number and mental agility. It recognises the benefits of exploring a range of strategies but also places very considerable emphasis on the development of the child's understanding.

Concepts

The NNS provides the basis for the programme for the teaching of concept maths.

Investigative Maths and Problem Solving (using and applying Maths)

This form of mathematics forms part of the curriculum from the earliest appropriate stages. Such work involves the use of knowledge and understanding of both number and concept maths. It tests the ability of children to apply their knowledge appropriately.

The school sees this area of maths as the most relevant for children and one which brings greater relevance to maths and places it into a real life context. With this in mind, teachers will, as far as is practically possible, commence every lesson with a real mathematical problem so that the concept being delivered, be it purely number or otherwise, can be seen as a tool to be used.

Science

The Whole-School Science Plan details the topics to be covered each half-term, as much of the science as possible is delivered via experimentation by the children but this does not preclude the imparting of knowledge by the teacher in a more didactic manner.

Strong emphasis from the earliest of stages is placed upon the basic discussion and recording of experiments and particular attention is paid to the conclusion and understanding drawn by the child.



The school's teaching of science has two main strands:

- the teaching of scientific areas or concepts as identified in the plans; and
- regular revisiting of concepts previously covered.

Information Communication Technology (ICT)

All children have access to computers and other forms of ICT from the very earliest of stages.

ICT is used to support learning in the early years. In later years the application of computers diversifies into computer aided learning, word-processing, data-handling, graphics work and information retrieval.

The National Curriculum ICT document forms the basis of planning throughout the school from yrs 1 to 6, alongside the Local Authority plans. The school's Internet Policy ensures that no child is exposed to inappropriate material.

The aim is for teachers to teach basic skills but also to embed ICT across all curriculum areas. Time in the ICT suite is allowed for this.

All children have the opportunity to work regularly at stand alone computers and on the network.

Design Technology

The teachers' planning will ensure that children are given the opportunity to:

- Work with every day objects in order to:
 - Investigate them
 - Disassemble them
 - Evaluate them
- Develop their technology skills through focused practical tasks that require them to design and make models/objects which they will then be expected to test and evaluate before suggesting or carrying out modifications.
- The scheme of work is adapted from the Qualifications, Curriculum, Development Agency scheme

Modern Foreign Languages (Key Stage 2 only)

At Palm Bay the choice of MFL is French.

Modern Foreign Language teaching is an integral part of the curriculum at Palm Bay. The aim is to develop positive attitudes towards language learning and our emphasis, therefore, is on enjoyment through practical application.

The children are learning based on the following themes:

Oracy and literacy
Intercultural understanding
Knowledge about Language
Language Learning Strategies



We deliver French through covering the Primary National Statutory Objectives. French is optional at Key Stage 1 and currently we do not implement this option.

Geography & History

The Whole-School Plans are adapted from the Qualifications, Curriculum, Development Agency Scheme. The documents detail the work to be covered each term by the teacher.

The plans ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum.

The emphasis in early years is placed upon the experiences of the child and the child's local environment. As the child moves through the school, the focus of study moves further a-field.

As much fieldwork and first-hand experience as possible is provided for the children.

Music

The Whole-School Plans detail the work to be covered by the teacher during the course of a term.

The school is well equipped to allow each child the experience of using a wide range of percussion instruments and more.

Additional music lessons (learning an instrument) are available for children across a range of instruments. Lessons are delivered by peripatetic teachers.

Physical Education

Whole-school plans for Physical Education (PE) are adapted from the Qualifications Curriculum Development Agency plans and detail what teachers should cover each term. Swimming lessons are provided throughout the year for groups of children in Year 3 and 4. The school's plans accommodate the needs of the able swimmers as well as those of children who are at early stages. Children in year 4 swim on a weekly basis for one term in the year. A small group of beginner swimmers is taken on a weekly basis throughout the year. These children are given instruction until they are able to swim about 25 metres competently. They then relinquish their place for another beginner.

Art

The school plans are adapted from the Qualifications, Curriculum, Development Agency planning documents. Work will involve individual work and co-operative group work. The emphasis is placed on 3D work in the early stages. The aim of art teaching is to stimulate children's creativity and imagination through visual, tactile and sensory experiences. The pupils express what they see, feel and think through their use of colour, pattern, form and texture. During their time at Palm Bay the children explore the work of various artists in order to learn about diverse artistic traditions and cultural heritage.



PSHE

Plans have been drawn up to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum Objectives. Many of the areas are covered in the day-to-day running and life of the classroom and school. Some areas that require particular focus have been identified and are allocated a slot in the timetable. Circle time is the most frequently used means of delivery.

Some areas are dealt with as integral parts of other subjects. PSHE is delivered by class teachers through termly themes.

Our curriculum, which aims to promote personal and social development through a variety of experiences and through the delivery of a range of subjects, aims to:

- raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem by reminding pupils and teachers of the importance of respecting everyone as an individual and appreciating effort;
- offer a supportive climate for learning;
- provide a foundation for acquiring the skills needed to learn and grow up at ease with oneself;
- increase pupils' motivation and deepen their understanding through providing relevant opportunities for 'real life' learning;
- improve pupils' ability to reflect on and become responsible for their own learning;
- reduce the chances that pupils' education will be interrupted or impaired, for example by abuse, drug issue, or fear of bullying.

Sex Education

The areas of Sex Education which are included in the National Curriculum Science Document are taught as part of the Science programme. The school operates a comprehensive SRE curriculum which has recently been reviewed and agreed by Governors, staff and parents (May 2010). SRE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about respect, love and care and the benefits of maintain a stable relationship which may or may not involve marriage. Our teaching of SRE is applicable to all sexual orientations and includes the teaching of sex, sexuality and health. Each year group as a topic to follow and staff are happy to discuss this with parents.

Curriculum Planning and Subject Identity

With the exception of some areas of PSHE, all subjects have their own identity and are taught separately.

The school does not subscribe to inter-disciplinary topics. Topic webs involving more than one subject are not a feature of our planning.

Teachers are however at liberty to identify dominant or common themes in subjects that have to be taught and establish links in their planning if they feel that this enhances the delivery of all relevant subjects and continues to maintain the degree of curriculum balance and breadth that we aim for.



Curriculum delivery

Effective teaching requires a variety of styles matched to the circumstances. Practical work and first-hand experience feature strongly in several curriculum areas. Equally there is a place for a more didactic approach by the teacher and the investigative approach which focuses on developing research skills among other things and which will necessitate a good deal of pupil-pupil and/or pupil-teacher interaction.

Copying from the board or from books/information sheets is a strategy that is used very sparingly and only when there is no suitable alternative. As a general practice, this strategy is seen as of little worth.

Worksheets will be used as appropriate. Teachers will ensure that such a strategy is the most appropriate way of delivering the work in question and that the tasks:

- are wholly relevant to the planned learning outcomes of the lessons;
- offer a sufficient level of challenge and are not low level tasks.

All work is planned and a two year cycle so that work is not repeated in subsequent year groups. Mixed aged classes follow the appropriate Learning Objectives for their year group/level of ability but do it through different topic areas. This more relevant for Foundation subjects.

Differentiation

Work in most areas will always have an appropriate degree of differentiation to ensure that it offers achievable challenge. This differentiation can take many forms ranging from differentiated support, additional resources, different level of challenge, different tasks, through to different expectations in terms of outcome. Generally teachers will aim for three levels of differentiation:

- Those who can and who need extension work
- Those for whom the task offers achievable challenge without modification
- Those who might find the task difficult and need some form of differentiation.

Policy Review:

This Curriculum Policy will be reviewed annually.

The next review is due: Autumn Term1, 2014.