

Curriculum Policy Statement



Priory Primary School
At the heart of the community

Approved by:

School Development
& Policies Committee

Date: 24th June 2021

Last reviewed:

Spring Term 2018

Next review due by:

Summer Term 2023

1. Intent of our School Curriculum

At Priory Primary School, we provide curriculum coverage of all National Curriculum subjects and programmes of study, follow the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and ensure pupils receive the statutory learning of Relationships Education. In Nursery and Reception classes – the Early Years provision – we promote the learning and development of our youngest pupils as set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework.

In our School Vision, we state that we seek to “provide irresistible learning experiences within the school curriculum”, and therefore we take a ‘Creative Curriculum’ approach where pupils work to a topic or theme each half term.

This enables staff to enliven the learning, to link across the subject areas and put children’s learning into a meaningful context. These topics (and the linked learning) quite specifically take account of our pupils and our community – what they might already know and be familiar with, and what experiences will really stretch their learning and expand their opportunities.

Aims of our School Curriculum

➤ **INDEPENDENT THINKERS**

An approach to the curriculum which teaches children how to learn: it encourages and facilitates the development of independent learning skills. This will enable pupils to access knowledge, understanding and appreciation of all areas of learning within and beyond the school curriculum – a foundation for lifelong learning

➤ **USEFUL & KIND**

A curriculum delivered within a happy and caring environment: it fosters in pupils a positive, sensitive and respectful attitude towards themselves, others and the wider world

➤ **SKILLS FOR LIFE**

A curriculum which embeds opportunities for pupils to develop and flourish physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually: in addition to key skills of literacy and numeracy, the curriculum will develop pupils’ skills to manage their mental well-being and physical health, to ask the ‘big questions’, to develop and appreciate self-discipline, co-operation, problem-solving and, crucially to access all these successfully, to flourish in their **language and communication skills**

2. Implementation of our School Curriculum

2.1 English

Phonics

We follow the synthetic phonics scheme Letters and Sounds, as recommended by the DfE. It is taught daily in Nursery, Reception and KS1 classes, and is adopted in an age-appropriate way, when our New to English pupils begin their English reading and spelling skills in KS2.

Letters and Sounds progresses through six phases which are outlined in Appendix 1.

Significant numbers of pupils join us as children New to English and we therefore also use the phonics scheme, from Phase 2, in KS2 classes as small group interventions.

Reading

Pupils are expected to have an individual reading book with them at all times, which will move between home and school, and be changed once the class teacher is satisfied that reading skill, reading for pleasure and reading for comprehension opportunities have been fully explored with the current book.

Individual reading books are selected by teaching staff or self-selected according to the pupils' age and stage, motivation and attitude to reading. These individual reading books are usually kept in pupils' school book bags for reading at home, reading 1:1 with an adult and 'quiet reading' time at school.

Pupils in Reception and KS1 are provided with a range of reading books from different commercial schemes which closely match their phonics level, by using the standard colour book band scheme. Pupils in KS2 continue through the colour bands until they are considered 'free readers'.

For an explanation of how colour bands match to letter & sounds phases and the expected National Curriculum levels at end of KS1 and KS2, please see Appendix 2.

Pupils will also read in small groups with their peers and teachers, for explicit teaching of reading skills in a 'guided reading' group, and these books remain in school.

Teachers in KS1 use the Ginn 360 Reading Scheme which is a long-established progressive scheme that builds children's vocabulary in a structured way that is particularly helpful for many of our bilingual, multilingual and New to English pupils. This is used with small groups and Guided Reading sessions, to ensure that key vocabulary is introduced to all pupils. The school has also invested in sets of Guided Reading books, many of which are linked to the creative curriculum topics, to further broaden pupils' experiences and connect the learning across subject areas.

Every class has its own supply of fiction and non-fiction books, including those related to the current Creative Curriculum Topic. These are periodically refreshed and supplied through the Schools Library Service. Pupils can access these books at any appropriate time as directed by the class teacher (for example, during Golden Time, free reading time or wet

playtime). These can also move freely between school and home at the discretion of the class teacher.

Finally, the school has a very well-stocked Library housed in its own space adjacent to the Hall, and pupils have set times that they can visit to borrow books of interest to them.

Writing

From September 2021, the school will be using a structured approach to the teaching of writing skills, based on the Write Stuff methodology, which organises lessons into tightly focused 'learning chunks'. This is a book-led approach, so that skills are seen modelled in the writing of real authors, and is particularly helpful for bilingual and multilingual pupils as it links experiential lessons, building spoken vocabulary, modelling and sharing sentences, through to independent writing. Teachers use the principles of this structured approach and are free to apply it to their own chosen texts or use a text provided by the scheme.

➤ Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

In the Early Years, the foundations for spelling are embedded in the structured teaching of phonics. As pupils progress towards the end of Key Stage 1, we use the CGP Books for English spelling, punctuation and grammar to structure the learning and prepare for the expectations at the end of each key stage. Teachers are free to use this resource flexibly between school and home work.

➤ Handwriting

From September 2021, the school will be introducing cursive handwriting from Reception class. This is a recommended approach for 'dyslexia-friendly' working, and has the advantage that pupils do not need to learn their letter formation twice over. It is NOT necessary for teachers to use cursive fonts in their displays, as pupils are taught to read a range of fonts. The cursive approach is for handwriting only. Teachers are asked to use cursive script when they model handwriting on the board or in exercise books.

2.2 MATHS

Maths at Priory Primary is about more than numbers. Through their understanding of numbers and other mathematical concepts, pupils will learn to understand and solve problems. They will learn to think about a problem, make intelligent choices about how to solve it, solve it, then think and check their solution makes sense. Pupils develop their mathematical processing and analytical skills and learn how to apply them, giving them the confidence in the subject so they can tackle mathematical tasks even when they encounter them in other contexts.

It is our policy to ensure that mathematics is a creative and valuable activity requiring not only facts and skills, but also an understanding gained through exploration, application to real life situations and discussion. Since 2019, the school has been using a Maths Mastery approach, and in the Spring of 2020 we adopted the scheme MathsNo Problem, which provides structured sequenced learning to meet the requirement of the National Curriculum.

This encourages the use of practical resources for all year groups and ensures pupils have a deep understanding of Maths concepts. The approach is now also reflected in the EYFS Curriculum Reforms. Among other things, the expectation is for pupils to continue to use manipulatives (practical resources) and pictorial models right through to the end of their Primary education, whilst recognising that pupils will be increasingly able to understand the concepts abstractly. Every classroom has a full range of manipulatives for both number and shape appropriate to their level of learning. Resources for learning about measure are available for use by classes from a centralised store.

Two other key features of our teaching and learning in Priory Primary School, is the use of 'Stem Sentences' which use precise, mathematical language to establish key concepts, and 'Small Steps' in learning which mean the teacher must plan carefully the way in which learning progresses through a key concept.

Teachers are encouraged to use the MathsNoProblem Workbooks in a way that gradually builds pupils independence to record their mathematical learning, such that by KS2, worksheets are used for reference only, and pupils are taught to record legibly and logically in exercise books.

Priory Primary also uses a mathematics workbook published by CGP, in which there are all the key topics which can be set as homework. This means that homework is consolidating the class learning and encountering the concepts in a new format.

Times Tables

The learning of times tables, one of the cornerstones of learning for Maths, is supported by the online resource TimesTables Rockstars (TRockstars) and is accessible to pupils at home or in school. All pupils are expected to know multiplication facts (to 12x12) by the end of Year 4, and from academic year 2021-22, will be subject to a statutory Multiplication Tables Check in the summer term of Year 4.

The school Calculation Policy can be read at Appendix 3.

2.3 OTHER CORE & FOUNDATION CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

The following areas of the National Curriculum are taught in line with the Programmes of Study recommended, which can be accessed at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>

Our school curriculum delivers these through a series of topics, outlined in Appendix 4.

- Science
- PSHE
- RE
- PE
- Geography
- History
- Art & Design
- Design Technology
- Music
- Modern Foreign Languages (German)

2.4 INCLUSION

Teachers plan topics and individual lessons so that pupils with SEND can study every National Curriculum subject, by taking account of – and where possible removing – individual pupils’ barriers to learning. Every pupil will have equal opportunity to experience the full school curriculum. When a pupil has a very high level need, this school curriculum may be adapted to their individual stage of development.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. The curriculum at Priory Primary School has been planned, in part, to take account of the (typically) 80 – 85% pupils who are learning with us in their second language, and to build English vocabulary and communication skills.

Included in our reading provision, there is a collection of library books in home languages. Additionally, there are reading books specifically written with age-appropriate subject matter for less able or new-to-English readers in Key Stage 2.

At Priory Primary School we have a dedicated member of teaching staff / leadership team who supports both teachers and individual pupils to achieve these ambitious inclusion objectives.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, our SEND policy and SEND information report.

3. Impact of the School Curriculum

Teaching staff, Senior Leaders and Governors monitor the impact of our Curriculum, in a number of ways:

3.1 Monitoring Achievement

Pupil progress in Years 1 to 6 is considered every half term, by class teachers assessing the extent to which each pupil has absorbed the learning and can demonstrate their understanding through the class lesson activities. Depending on the subjects this may be recorded in exercise books, in practical tasks or in low stakes testing.

Teachers discuss pupil progress with senior leaders and plan the next term’s learning accordingly. This process also dovetails with the implementation of small intervention groups, which are also monitored every half term, but through more detailed tracking sheets to ensure they are meeting the pupils’ inclusion needs.

Pupil progress and data trends are analysed by the Head Teacher and SENDCo, and presented to the Governors via the School Development and Policies Committee which meets every term.

3.2 Statutory Assessments

The school also administers the key statutory assessments:

- Reception Baseline Assessment
- EYFS Early Learning Goals

- Phonics Screening Check
- Key Stage 1 SATS tests and Teacher Assessment
- Multiplication Tables Check
- Key Stage 2 SATS tests and Teacher Assessment

The school reports to parents and publishes results of these statutory assessments on the school website.

3.3 Curriculum Monitoring and Review

Every curriculum subject has a lead teacher and a link Governor. Subject Leaders are given dedicated time to monitor the impact of their subject on the pupils' learning, and to support colleagues in delivering a structured and progressive curriculum threading through the topics.

Link Governors are on hand to meet subject leaders twice a year, to offer challenge and support, and help the subject leader plan continuous improvements in their subject area, to the benefit of our pupils. Subject Leaders and Link Governors will jointly present a short annual report to the Full Governing Body. Through this process, we aim that every curriculum area is efficiently resourced and given appropriate weighting so that pupils really do get a broad and balanced curriculum, and that staff are able to model and pass on their enthusiasm – to pupils and colleagues alike – for learning in a particular subject area.

As with pupil outcomes, the School Development Plan is the mechanism for making sure the curriculum is alive and improving year on year and is monitored termly by the Full Governing Body.

The Curriculum Policy Statement is reviewed by the Head Teacher and Governing Body every two years.