

## **CURRICULUM POLICY 2016**

### **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 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 of what pupils in each age group will cover.

### **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 the various extra-curricular activities that are organised in order to enrich the children's experience as well as the 'hidden curriculum' – 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.

### **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.

We aim to provide a broad, balanced, relevant curriculum that:

- Promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of our pupils.
- Prepares our pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- Provides opportunities for all pupils to learn and to achieve their full potential.

Our pupils will be taught:

- a broad and balanced curriculum
- a range of skills that will help to prepare them for adult life
- to find pleasure in their own achievements and those of others
- to develop positive attitudes towards themselves and others and towards learning
- to work co-operatively and/or independently as a task demands
- that positive attitudes and hard work are rewarded.

Our pupils will learn through:

- practical first-hand experience
- 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

The role of the teacher is to ensure that every pupil achieves her/his full potential.

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 – children of different ages and with different abilities
- 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.

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

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

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

From Year 1 onwards, the children follow “The 2014 National Curriculum,” which comprises the following subjects: English, Maths, Science, Design and Technology, Information and Communications Technology, History, Geography, Art and Design, Music and PE. The children also study Religious Education, following a locally agreed syllabus provided by the Worcestershire Diocesan Board of Education.

### **EVERY CHILD MATTERS**

Over the last few years, the national initiatives “Excellence and Enjoyment” and “Every Child Matters” have had an extremely positive influence on our curriculum and have also had a significant impact on the extra-curricular activities that take place in our school. Thus, during the children’s time in our school, we teach them about how to:

- Be safe.
- Be healthy.
- Enjoy and achieve.
- Make a positive contribution to the community.
- Prepare for their future economic well-being.

### **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.

### **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 are taught in all year groups in a variety of subject areas and also, more discretely, within our Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education lessons.

## **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 (in particular the application of number)
- Effective and safe use of technology
- working with others
- improving one's own learning and performance
- application of thinking skills
- 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.

As a First School with pupils aged 4 – 9 years, we consider it appropriate to place emphasis on helping our pupils:

- to learn to read and write, speak articulately and listen attentively
- to become numerate and develop an understanding of mathematics
- to develop their natural curiosity through investigation of the world around them
- to develop their creative and practical skills
- to learn how to work effectively, both independently and in co-operation with others

To promote the development of these skills, the children will learn and practise skills across the whole curriculum.

Every child will be taught:

- to write for a variety of audiences
- to read for information and pleasure
- to present their work to others
- to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge
- to raise questions and learn how to find answers.

## **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.

## **HOW DO CHILDREN LEARN? – OUR PHILOSOPHY**

### **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 sense of community by sharing our work in assemblies and working together to develop and care for the school environment.

### **Trust and Be Trusted**

In order to help children to develop as individuals we aim to promote:

- self esteem
- self confidence
- self motivation
- self discipline
- creativity
- a sense of responsibility

## **All Children Are Individuals**

We believe that children learn in a variety of ways and that good teachers adopt various teaching styles so that all learning styles are accommodated.

At different times the children will be taught as:

- a whole class
- in small groups
- as individuals

We place considerable emphasis on the quality of interaction between teacher and pupil and we aim to develop a caring atmosphere within the school. We believe that children must be treated as individuals.

We also recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence (eg Mathematics, English, physical, naturalist, musical, inter-personal, intrapersonal, artistic) and all children are intelligent in one way or another. We also endeavour to encourage children to learn through a range of visual, audio and kinaesthetic learning styles but appreciate that different children will have different preferred learning styles.

As far as possible, we endeavour to personalise the learning of each individual pupil.

### **Practical First Hand Experience**

According to the nature of the subject being taught, and the pupils' individual needs, the children may learn things:

- through practical investigation
- by listening
- watching
- doing
- memorising
- practising
- consulting various sources of information (the teacher, a parent, the library, a video clip, a computer, etc.)

A great many lessons include a practical element. We know that young children need to experiment and investigate and that most children learn best through practical experience and real problem solving. We also have to accept that a lesson is seldom learned and internalised the first time. This means that most lessons have an element of revision or practice built into them.

Many play activities contain valuable learning experiences and we try to exploit these to the full. Wherever possible we believe learning should be fun!

## **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). Children in Years 2, 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 a smooth progression in the demands made of the children as they progress from class to class 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.

## **INDUCTION PROCESS**

The school induction programme has been developed to provide the best possible introduction to schooling for pupils. As all pupils are individuals, we customise the induction programme to suit individual needs, prioritising what is in the best educational interest of each **child**. This is the case for children starting in any year group within the school. The teaching staff will always discuss the induction process with parents.

For children starting in Reception, it is our aim to work closely with parents to ensure that children settle easily and happily into school life. Some children find it easier than others - the younger children, especially, will find a whole day in school very tiring after their sessions in previous settings with smaller groups of children. Staff seek to understand the needs of each individual child during the induction period by talking to parents and visiting pre-school and nursery settings prior to the children starting school.

The induction programme for children in Reception includes:-

- a meeting for parents of the new Reception intake early in the Summer term at which details of the induction process are discussed, specific dates announced and parents are given an opportunity to ask questions and look around the classrooms

- a Story Club during the Summer Term prior to admission (usually 5 x 40 minute sessions)
- visits by the Reception staff to respective pre-school / nursery settings during the Summer term.
- Induction Day - in July, when our new Reception intake attend for a half day session
- A three week induction period in September incorporating a staggered entry system which serves 4 main purposes:  
To gradually introduce children to a full school day  
To allow the staff to get to know the children in smaller groups  
To enable staff to carry out important assessments of the children  
To ensure that the children can gradually become familiar with their new school and routines

## **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.

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

Our delivery of the curriculum is enhanced through a programme of educational visits and extra-curricular activities, including instrumental tuition and team games. After school, there are a number of clubs that pupils have the opportunity to attend. These include examples such as:

- Football
- Tag Rugby
- Cricket
- Athletics
- Tennis
- Bromsgrove Sports Development – Multi-skills
- Choir
- Dance
- Gymnastics
- Basketball
- Science
- Computing
- Eco and Gardening
- FoodTechnology
- Art
- Tri Golf

There is at least one after school club, of one kind or another, running on every day of the week.

Music provision is a real strength within our school with peripatetic music teachers taking classes throughout the week in clarinet, violin, guitar, cello, saxophone and keyboard. Children are also taught to play the recorder as part of the curriculum.

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 E.g. Doris Dinsdale (Make do and Mend) in Year 4; Titus Flavius Lustus in Year 3; Samuel Pepys in Year 2; Victorian Seaside Special in Year 1; Pirates and the Deep Blue Sea in Year R.

## **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.

#### **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 18<sup>th</sup> October 2016.**

**It will be reviewed in October 2017.**

**Governor Responsible: Martin Evans**