

The Curriculum at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Banbury



We believe that:

- if we nurture gratitude in our pupils, they will practise generosity;
- if we nurture attentiveness in our pupils, they will practise discernment, make good decisions in their lives and accept responsibility for their actions;
- if we nurture compassion and love in our pupils, they will treat others with respect and they will learn to empathise with those who suffer poverty, injustice or violence;
- if we nurture faith and hope in our pupils, they will have the confidence to contribute positively to the communities in which they live and inspire others to be hopeful for the future;
- if we nurture eloquence and truthfulness in our pupils, they will be honest and respectful in their relationships with others;
- if we nurture wisdom and a desire to learn in our pupils, they will use their gifts and skills for the benefit of others and will contribute positively to others' lives;
- if we nurture curiosity in our pupils and engage them actively in their learning, they will become lifelong learners who are tolerant and respectful of difference and diversity;
- if we nurture a strong conscience in our pupils, they will have the confidence to lead by example, reflecting God's love to others and striving for harmony and equality in the communities around them.

In order to realise this vision for our children, we are developing an ambitious and engaging, progressive curriculum which we believe will challenge and stimulate our pupils to be the very best versions of themselves.

We aim to develop a love of learning in our pupils; inspiring them with a sense of “awe and wonder” and nurturing in them a lifelong desire to find out more about the world around them. We aim to provide them with an aspirational curriculum which is:

- rooted in a genuine enthusiasm for knowledge and understanding;
- inspired by posing big questions and encouraging an authentic sense of inquiry;
- sustained by access to high quality texts;
- and enables a cumulative building of knowledge and skills.

We believe that, in this way, our pupils will become successful learners in all subjects, exhibiting excellent behaviours for learning, demonstrating high quality skills of communication and developing a deep confidence in their own ability to challenge and explore ideas rather than simply accept them. This will enable them to achieve their potential, whatever their starting point may be.

We believe that our ‘Big Ideas Curriculum’ will further develop one of our key priorities in our School Improvement Plan of accelerating the acquisition of high-quality language and will strengthen the children’s ability to make links in their learning across all subject areas. One of our key goals is to create ‘depth’ in all subjects.

The ‘Concepts’ will be taught on a two-year rolling programme to allow for progression and reiteration so that the learning ‘sticks’ for the children. The Concepts are:

Civilisations; Sustainability; Different and Equal; Exploration; Cause and Consequence; Continuity and Change.

We have chosen these because, whilst addressing the required coverage of the National Curriculum, these concepts also give us the necessary framework to expand our pupils’ experiences of the world and nurture the understanding they need to be citizens of a global community in the future, while allowing us to provide as much enrichment as we can.

Implementation

Having identified the key Big Ideas, these will be taught to all children across the school in identified terms. We use a mastery approach, breaking learning into small steps, making links where meaningful across the curriculum, and ensuring all children feel valued and that they recognise and develop their skills across the full range of subjects and skills.

In EYFS the Big Ideas will run as a ‘red thread’ through the Development Matters programme of study.

In KS1 and KS2 the Big Ideas will form a significant part of the teaching and learning in each term and will be taught across a period of some weeks as appropriate to the learning of each phase and cohort of children. It will not be explicitly taught through the whole term as we feel that a more focused and intensive period of teaching is more beneficial and effective when presenting children with new knowledge, but we aim to relate the children’s learning to the Big Idea through the term,

enabling them to make explicit links in their learning, and ensuring that the learning is cumulative and meaningful.

In reviewing, planning and developing each Big Idea, staff look for ways to make learning as interactive as possible, including thinking about ways to use outdoor learning, trips, investigations, discussion, play, writing, creating or making, open tasks, allowing children to apply a range of skills, ask questions and engage actively in all learning opportunities to ensure they 'stick'.

Phase teams plan together but the whole staff work together to ensure progression across the school in all 'Big Ideas' skills and knowledge. Subject Champions monitor planning, teaching and assessment as well as curriculum coverage; supporting colleagues and ensuring high-quality, memorable learning takes place across the school.

Each Big Idea is planned with reference firstly to History and Geography and then to the Creative Arts, PSME, British Values and other areas of the wider curriculum. 'Big Questions' are posed as part of the teaching of each Big Idea.

Homework is designed to encourage the practice and repetition of skills required for fluency in Maths and English and also to develop the children's skills as independent learners, and the 'Big Ideas' lend themselves to children being involved in project/investigation-based learning which allows for families to do activities together, but can also be completed independently.

Impact

At St Joseph's, when you walk into a classroom you will see:

- Teachers bringing learning to life
- Teachers enabling children to use the four 'Rs' from the learning compass
- Children confidently and actively engaged in their learning;
- Children enjoying their learning and working enthusiastically;
- Children engaging respectfully with adults and peers, sharing learning and working collaboratively;
- Classrooms which are calm and purposeful;
- Excellent relationships between adults and children which support the children to develop resilience and develop their learning;
- Adults intervening in a timely fashion to address misconceptions and to challenge children further;
- Visual reminders to the children of our St Joseph's Learning Compass and children living these;
- Visual evidence of children's access to Art & Design;
- Children accessing working walls;
- Evidence of children being exposed to a positive understanding of diversity.

You will hear:

- Children sharing their experiences of their lives and their learning;
- A buzz of excitement about learning in which talk is purposeful;

- Partner talk being used to embed learning and articulate understanding, not just of knowledge, concepts or ideas but also of the learning process;
- High quality professional dialogue between colleagues focusing on the needs of whole groups and individual children.

We measure the impact of our curriculum through:

- Regular reflection on children's engagement and access to the curriculum;
- Ongoing, formative assessment of children's progress;
- Regular, formal assessments of children's progress and attainment;
- Pupil Voice interviews;
- Monitoring of curriculum coverage.