

# **CURRICULUM POLICY**

Summer 2017

## **GOVERNORS' CURRICULAR AIMS**

The curriculum we offer to children at Vallis First School is intended to develop the whole child; socially, emotionally, physically, spiritually and intellectually and to provide the basic skills needed for life and work.

In particular the curriculum seeks:

- to help pupils gain respect for moral and religious values as well as developing an acceptance and understanding of other races, religions and ways of life in modern Britain
- to encourage the children to widen their use of language, both written and spoken and where required a modern foreign language
- to help pupils to develop their mathematical skills and to apply those effectively
- to develop an interest in science, design and technology, computing and the natural world
- to encourage children to express themselves through music, drama, a variety of arts and crafts and develop the necessary skills in these areas
- to impart to children an understanding of history and geography and of the environment in which they live
- to help children develop physical co-ordination and confidence
- to teach children a sense of responsibility for themselves and their community
- to encourage children's awareness of how to value and care for themselves and live a healthy lifestyle

## **RATIONALE**

The curriculum consists of activities planned to promote the development of our children and to prepare them for the next stage of their lives and to help them to be responsible citizens in modern Britain. We aim in this document to give some detail about our approaches to teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two.

## **AIMS FOR THE SCHOOL**

- to inspire children in their learning through making it fun and relevant
- to meet the needs of families and involve them in their children's learning
- to value children as individuals but to encourage them to recognise the needs of others
- to help children to feel safe and to be happy and healthy
- to give children access to the skills they need to enjoy life and achieve personal fulfilment
- to involve children with the wider community

## **THE SCHOOL'S CONTRIBUTION TO PROMOTING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

We work closely with Governors to evaluate and improve the school. We seek constantly to develop and improve our partnership with parents and the wider community in the education of children.

We recognise the role of the Personal, Social, Health Curriculum (PSHE), RE, PE, Modern Foreign Languages and Global Learning including Geography in developing our children as healthy, responsible and caring members of our local community and citizens of the diverse cultures of modern Britain and the world.

We have systems in place to keep parents and Governors informed e.g. weekly newsletter, termly topic overviews, diary dates and notice-boards, a website and an annual end of year Headteacher's report to the Governors and an end of year letter to parents.

We engage parents and other family members in supporting their children's learning through Family Learning events, workshops and information evenings as well as performances, Parents' Forums and annual written reports.

We use the local press to inform the wider community. We look for opportunities to bring the life of the school to the community and the life of the community to the school e.g. invitations to our Christmas Community Performance.

The upgrading of our resources and our Community Room has made our school premises more useful to the community. The local Children's Centre services use the Community Room to offer activities and events to local families including school families such as Stay and Play and the Toy Library. This resource is also used to provide a Before School Activity club for the benefit of our children and their parents.

We foster links with nurseries, local schools and colleges and with outside agencies e.g. health services, police, local industry and clubs such as the local sports clubs as well as the Rotary Club.

We work in partnership with the local schools (Frome Learning Partnership, FLP) to extend the opportunities available to our children and to encourage them to play and work alongside children from other socio-economic backgrounds, beliefs and cultures.

The FLP provides alternative curriculum resources such as Forest School where vulnerable children can develop skills and build confidence. Our joint Sports Partnership uses funds pooled from our Sport Premium Grant to extend sporting opportunities including competitive sporting contests. Together we may organise additional opportunities for children with a particular talent or skill to work with each other. Jackdaws, a local music charity works in partnership with the Somerset Music Hub to provide additional music events. The partnership attracts additional funding and projects which increases opportunities in all areas of the curriculum.

We access the many resources and opportunities available in the town such as galleries, theatres, the museum, the library, the river and parks.

We access the benefits of the Southwest through a residential based in Kilve on the north coast of Somerset, and topics using local attractions e.g. Bristol Museum, the Roman Baths etc.

We constantly strive to enhance the school's good reputation in the community and the County.

## **APPROACH TO CHILDREN'S LEARNING IN KEY STAGE ONE AND TWO**

At Vallis we have agreed to use six 'Curriculum Drivers' which reflect what we aspire to offer our children in our curriculum planning. They are Creativity, Community, Caring, Challenge, Communication and Global Citizenship. We use topics to bring together relevant areas of learning, skills and knowledge in a fun and interesting way. We seek to provide activities, which will develop the whole child, and which are selected on the basis of the child's ability, aptitude or choice.

Underpinning our curriculum is our Building Learning Power (based on Guy Claxton's work), which teaches important life and learning skills linked to animal characters. Resilience is being a Tough Tortoise, Reflectiveness is a Wise Owl, Resourcefulness is Sensible Squirrel and Reciprocity is Team Ant.

As part of a mastery curriculum approach, planning and support is offered to meet the diverse needs of our learners to ensure the majority are able to achieve the Age Related Standards.

Close attention to National Curriculum orders (September 2014) will be reflected in our planning, striving for relevance, breadth and balance.

A combination of direct teaching and investigational methods of learning will be used according to the task in hand using individual, group or whole class teaching when appropriate.

We aim to provide investigative and problem solving activities and whenever possible, to develop independent learning. Learning from first hand experience is recognised as a priority.

We take care to be thorough and structured in our approach through detailed assessment leading to planning for next steps, liaising with staff and recording.

We aim for high standards and encourage every child to strive for and recognise quality.

We believe that time to dwell and reflect is vital.

It is our belief that praise and positive responses should far outweigh a negative approach. We provide opportunities to share achievements.

We feel that opportunities to respond to challenges benefit all children in work and in play.

### **APPROACH TO CHILDRENS' LEARNING IN EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum allows us to plan and deliver a curriculum suitable for the very youngest of our children with a wide range of first hand learning experiences, vital to their development. We also use our six Curriculum Drivers (see above) to direct the content of our topics.

We recognise that between the ages 0 to 5 years a child develops both physically and intellectually at a greater rate than at other times in their lives. Therefore, we need to maximise this potential by providing appropriate structured play and teaching opportunities within a secure, happy and stimulating environment. We expect that the majority of children will achieve or exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception Year.

Building Learning Power (see above) also underpins our EYFS curriculum.

We maintain close links with our feeder pre-schools to ensure a smooth transition into our Reception classes.

Our Early Years Curriculum seeks to:

- provide opportunities for children to learn through first hand experiences
- encourage them to pursue their natural curiosity
- help children gain confidence in themselves as learners
- generate and promote enjoyment in learning
- help children make links between different aspects of learning through the topic approach
- encourage active learning and self-motivation as a basis for learning through exploration, experimentation, investigation, listening and sharing with others
- provide support for children with special needs. Where it is felt to be appropriate the SENCO is involved in assessing the children needs, in suggesting programmes to meet these needs and if necessary making the referrals to support services
- value and build on home and pre-school and nursery experiences and encourage strong, supportive parental involvement

Opportunities for the following aspects of learning experience are catered for in our Early Years:

- paint, sand and water play, cooking , construction, books, role play, games and puzzles, visits within the community and outdoor play. Activities to promote fine and gross motor skills are given a high priority as are speaking and listening and the development of vocabulary.

Organisation within the classrooms and Reception Base will also reflect the school's commitment to:

- provide an ordered social context with secure routines that guarantee children's safety and welfare
- provide experiences that reflect and extend the home and maintain partnership with it
- teaching and care which nurtures in the children a sense of self esteem and personal worth and holds high expectations of their potential.
- the needs of the least and most able children being met through differentiation of task or expected outcome whenever appropriate.

**Linked Policies containing more detail about content and teaching in specific subjects (see website):**

See school curriculum policies, EYFS Policy and planning documents.