



GOVERNORS' STATEMENT OF CURRICULAR INTENT

March 2021

The Curriculum we offer to children at Vallis First School is intended to develop the whole child - socially, emotionally, morally, culturally, physically, spiritually and intellectually and to provide the basic skills needed for life and work. We aim to develop enquiring minds, a spirit of curiosity and the skills to work independently but also as part of a team.

In particular the curriculum seeks:

- to teach children a sense of responsibility for themselves and their community, our nation, the environment and value and respect for each other.
- to encourage children's awareness of how to value and care for themselves and live a healthy lifestyle.
- 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.
- to encourage the children to widen their use of language, both written and spoken.
- to help pupils to develop their mathematical skills and to apply those effectively.
- to develop an interest in science, technology 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.

THE CURRICULUM INTENT

We aim to provide an exciting, stimulating curriculum, making links across subjects and adding in creative opportunities wherever we can. We want learning to be fun! We will use the National Curriculum which ensures that children in Key Stage 1 and 2 experience a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. The National Curriculum is available online and policies can be requested. It is important to note that the requirements of the National Curriculum do not apply to those children who are not of statutory school age. Foundation Stage classes have a special curriculum which works towards 'Early Learning Goals'. The emphasis in the Foundation Stage is to provide stimulating learning activities appropriate for young children which will prepare them for their later years in school.

The school curriculum for children in Key Stage 1 and 2 includes English, Mathematics, Science, Design and Technology, Computing, History, Geography, Music, Art and Design, Physical Education and a number of cross-curricular areas. These include subjects such as Personal, Social, Citizenship and Health Education, Environmental Studies and other areas which are relevant to the children's learning e.g. swimming. Religious Education follows the agreed County syllabus. Our Key Stage 2 children learn French as a Modern Foreign Language.

'Powerful Learners' is a key part of our curriculum. Throughout everything we do, we strive to teach them important aspects and skills of being a learner for life such as Resilience (Tough Tortoise), Reflectiveness (Wise Owl), Resourcefulness (Sensible Squirrel) and Reciprocity - being able to work

as a team - (Team Ant). These skills help learners to improve their learning and performance in education, work and life.



EYFS

Our curriculum is designed to recognise children's prior learning, both from previous settings and their experiences at home. We work in partnership with parents, carers and other settings to provide the best possible start at Vallis First School, ensuring each individual reaches their full potential from their various starting points.

Our curriculum has been designed to enable children to succeed through cooperative and collaborative learning principles. As such, there is a strong emphasis on the Prime Areas of learning; Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication and Language, including Oracy.

At Vallis First School we recognise that oracy not only improves academic outcomes, but is a life skill to ensure success beyond school, in life and future employment. Oracy develops children's thinking and understanding, which in turn promotes self-confidence, resilience and empathy which support the child's well-being. Our enabling environments and warm, skilful adult interactions support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration right from the start.

We believe that high level engagement ensures high level attainment. We therefore provide an engaging curriculum that maximises opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular links and learning experiences, as well as promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained thinking. We follow children's interests and ideas to foster a lifelong love of learning both in and outside of school.

By the end of the Reception year, our intent is to ensure that all children make at least good progress from their starting points and are equipped with the skills and knowledge to have a smooth transition into Year 1.



MATHEMATICS

We aim to develop a sound understanding of the number system and of mental calculation skills. Many activities are of a practical nature involving using equipment and resources to help the children develop their understanding. The curriculum content includes number, shape, space and measures, problem solving, reasoning, statistics and applying their skills to a range of problems. Wherever possible these are covered in fun activities which relate to everyday contexts. We encourage parents to practise maths skills at home with their children – particularly learning their number bonds and times tables.



ENGLISH

We use a number of approaches to support English in our School. **Reading** is enjoyed and celebrated as an important life skill. We have a strongly embedded phonics scheme which helps children

with their early reading and spelling skills. This teaches letter sounds, letter names and word building. As the child progresses, early reading material is supported by a wide variety of reading books including 'reading scheme' books at the appropriate levels. As soon as children become more fluent readers, they have the opportunity to choose the books they want to read at home. Good quality whole class texts are used to support the development of topics and teach key skills. **Writing** is developed by encouraging children to write in different situations and for a variety of reasons. Writing is modelled by adults and children are supported until they can write independently. Work may sometimes be printed out on the computer or published for other children to read and for parents to come in and see. Handwriting is taught from Foundation Stage and leads towards joined up writing for those children who are ready to master it successfully.

Money from the school budget, fund raising and our successful Book Weeks, is spent each year to replace and build up our resources which support our class and individual reading, and to ensure an up-to-date selection of reading materials are available to all the children within class and in our Library. We make use of the school and town library to encourage a love of reading and to learn library skills. We make full use of information technology to support our literacy programme including phonic games and interactive texts.



COMPUTING



Computing is a key aspect of the school's curriculum. We have a computer, interactive whiteboard and a visualiser in each classroom and have Wi Fi so that the children can learn using laptop computers. We also have digital cameras in each class. Computing skills (such as coding, word processing, multimedia and handling data) are taught directly and are used throughout the curriculum. We have a number of programmable toys which are used to teach coding skills for our younger children. A particular emphasis is placed on delivering English and Numeracy through technology and we are constantly expanding our online resources. We aim to provide children with the confidence and skills to use computer resources effectively and safely. The School has filtered access to the internet. E-safety is taught as part of the curriculum and each year we take part in Internet Safety day in addition to the termly reminders.



SCIENCE



Science plays an important part in school life. Emphasis is put on developing the children's natural curiosity as they learn to investigate and discover for themselves. As these skills develop, the children are encouraged to produce theories and ideas from their observations and eventually to devise 'fair tests' to see if what they believe is true.

Crucial to science are investigation skills, with children discovering for themselves. They learn about the natural world and living things, about forces and physical processes and materials and their properties. We ensure that the children have a wide range of practical and first hand experiences and we make good use of our outdoor environment including our field, the local river walks and allotment for bug hunting and looking at habitats or signs of changing seasons and the variety of plant life.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



We follow the Somerset agreed syllabus for R.E. with Christianity as the main focus faith and Judaism, Hinduism and Islam as other focus faiths. While actual knowledge of religion and its significance is taught, Religious Education in a first school is primarily concerned with children developing an awareness of themselves, others and the fostering of positive moral attitudes within a caring and tolerant setting.

Our wider school curriculum also looks at a number of aspects of life such as change, friendships, anti-bullying, setting goals, respect and explores these themes sensitively at an age appropriate level.



MULTI – CULTURAL AND EQUALITIES EDUCATION



We teach our children about a variety of cultures and about equality and diversity represented in Britain and across the world. We emphasise the aspects of British Values of: Democracy; the Principle of Law; Personal Rights of Freedom and Liberty; Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those of different Faiths and Beliefs. We take every opportunity to raise the children's awareness of the many traditions, cultures and the diversity represented in our school and society, celebrating and valuing our similarities and differences. Our Anti-Racist policy forms part of our Equalities policy and all racist, homophobic and other bullying incidents are taken very seriously and investigated.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)



We aim to provide two sessions per week of high quality PE for each child in our school. Careful planning and close adherence to our scheme of work allows every child to make full use of the space and equipment available and for teachers to monitor development. As part of our school's membership of the local Schools' Sports Partnership, we have access to coaching experts and additional equipment and opportunities to take part in inter school competitions. We use our Sports Grant funding to support these activities as well as using some of this money to support active play at lunchtimes with a games leader. The PE we provide includes gymnastics, dance, games skills, swimming and multi-skills.



GEOGRAPHY



Geography in the school includes the following areas - geographical skills, knowledge and understanding of places, physical geography, human geography and environmental geography. All work takes into careful consideration the children's developmental stage.

We make use of our local environment as much as possible to give children experience of mapping

skills and we often plan a trip to help the children's understanding.



HISTORY

History is sensitively taught at our school and care is taken to ensure that studies are carried out at the appropriate level for the children. History teaching includes the following areas - knowledge and understanding of history, interpreting the past and using historical sources. We aim to give the children a sense of time, awareness of the difference between fact and fiction and of changes in everyday life. Whenever possible, we try to ensure the children handle real resources and invite visitors in to talk about their personal history or we visit a suitable location.



Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

This school is committed to giving children a rich and exciting introduction to MFL. We value all languages. Children who speak languages in addition to English, throughout the school, have opportunities to share their home languages when appropriate. MFL is a curriculum requirement from KS2 and in our school our chosen language is French. At an age appropriate level, children are taught speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. We teach French through songs, games, video clips and role play.



CREATIVE ARTS (including Music, Art, Design and Technology, Dance and Drama)

The school is committed to providing a rich variety of experiences in all areas of the Creative Arts. Local art galleries, theatres and creative organisations and trusts offer workshops and opportunities to our children.

Ample opportunity is given for children to participate in musical experimentation and listening activities. Music in the school covers musical composition, performance, listening and appraising skills. The children learn a wide repertoire of songs and use both pitched and un-pitched instruments.

Each Christmas, and at other events including Harvest, the children learn songs and practise their performance skills in front of parents. The school takes every opportunity to perform for the parents and local community at venues such as the Cheese and Grain. We also invite musicians to the school to teach and inspire the children and take part in whole school singing projects.

Children are given opportunities to experiment with a wide range of media - paint, clay, sand, water, sewing, paper and paste - with attention being paid to the development of skills and techniques. Our Arts curriculum also includes the following areas - investigation and making; knowledge and understanding of art and design (including styles used by artists); artistic traditions and techniques.



Personal, Social and Health Education



We know there is a proven link between children's health and wellbeing and their academic progress. Crucial skills and positive attitudes developed through comprehensive PSHE and Relationship education are critical to ensuring children are effective learners.

We aim to ensure that:

- We develop children's self-esteem, confidence and self-awareness to make informed choices and decisions.
- We encourage and support the development of social skills and social awareness.
- We enable children to make sense of their own personal and social experiences.
- We promote responsible attitudes towards good physical and mental health, supported by a safe and healthy lifestyle.
- We support thoughtful relationships and develop a caring attitude towards others
- We help children understand and manage their feelings, build resilience and be independent, curious problem solvers.
- We help children understand how society works, the laws and rights and responsibilities involved.



PUPIL VOICE



Pupil voice is an important aspect of life at Vallis – we like our children to be able to voice their opinion confidently and to be involved in decisions that involve and affect them. As an inclusive school, we like to encourage and support all pupils to contribute to their learning environment and their school in general. We want to develop a culture where all the children feel listened to, valued, respected and empowered. Within their classes, we aspire to develop a culture where all the children contribute regularly to decision making. In the wider school, we try to achieve our aims by setting up pupil teams for specific projects rather than having a general school council. This allows more children to be involved across the school; they have a specific objective or goal that they are trying to achieve and there is a positive, tangible outcome.