

Isaac Newton Primary School Curriculum Policy



Introduction

At Isaac Newton Primary School we define the curriculum as

“All of the planned activities that are organised in order to promote learning and personal growth and development”.

It includes not only the formal requirements of the National Curriculum (a set of subjects and standards used to ensure that children learn the same things and achieve the standards set out), but also the range of extra-curricular activities that the school organises in order to enrich the experience of the children. It also includes the ‘hidden curriculum’, or those things that the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave.

Mission and Values

Our school curriculum is underpinned by the mission and values that we hold dear:

Our Mission

To unlock our children’s potential through a fun, challenging and aspirational environment; allowing each child to grow into a unique, independent and creative thinker, ready for whatever the future holds.

Our Values:

Inspiration:

We will inspire each of our children, allowing them to enjoy school and to actively engage in their learning.

Determination:

We will ensure that pupils know that learning begins when you are not able to do something. This is the point at which perseverance will ensure that new levels of understanding and competence can be reached.

Exploration:

We will create a safe environment in which pupils are able to deepen their understanding of all that is studied ensuring that children are inquisitive and self-motivated.

Aspirations:

We will work with all children to ensure that they have high expectations of themselves, understand the world of possibilities for their own futures and have a pathway to achieve success.

The 4 Core Aims of our Curriculum

Having given due consideration to our values we then ensure that these are interwoven with our 4 core aims for the curriculum. At Isaac Newton we believe that the curriculum should be:

High Quality

Teaching and learning should be good or better with the focus on learning. It should be well resourced. Displays will reflect work in progress and outcomes. Foundation subjects, especially history, geography and science are often a main subject focus within the projects, although we will use opportunities for Literacy wherever possible. Subjects such as Maths and P.E. will be taught discretely unless there are suitable links within a theme (tenuous links will not be made). Children will experience memorable and exciting learning moments!

There will be agreed medium term plans for all themes. Links to subjects will be clear in planning and teaching. A consistent and developmental approach to core learning will be key. A weekly timetable will run alongside the medium term plan indicating the points reached on the medium plan. Copies of all planning will be kept in the class planning file and posted onto the Learning Platform.

Experiential

A wide range of hands on experiences will be offered to the children both in school and outside. This will include visits off site as well as visitors to the school. It also includes using the whole school environment. Within an experiential approach children will be given tools for learning. Children will use their prior learning experiences to make links and so develop their knowledge at a deeper level.

Active

Teaching will be stimulating and challenging. A variety of teaching styles will be used. Children will be engaged in learning through hands on activities, problem solving, creative thinking, reasoning and questioning. Children will understand what they have learned and why. Aspects of AFL will be used. Speaking and listening will be crucial. The children will often work in pairs or small groups discussing ideas and working collaboratively on projects. Children will take more responsibility for their learning in practical and evaluative ways. Choice within homework will allow children to actively engage in learning beyond the classroom.

Purposeful

Children understand what they are learning and why. The outcome of the learning should be clearly defined. It may be a high quality project book, a presentation to the school or parents, display, exhibition or model. Activities may start as a challenge. Working walls will be used to display the learning process. Children will be aware of learning skills and how

these can be used as targets. Projects will be based on questioning, research and gaining knowledge.

Organisation of the Curriculum

Our Themes

We often use Themes to develop a curriculum that is exciting for the children and provides coherence between content, skills and the development of critical thinking skills. It also provides an opportunity to harness the interests of our children, building in motivation and deeper immersive learning. We typically plan to complete a Theme once per term on an appropriate and engaging subject as recommended in the National Curriculum. The theme may incorporate history or geography, music, design technology, science and art as well as the development of responsible citizenship, but will have a strong emphasis on the development of Key Skills within each subject. When there is not a natural link between the chosen theme and the subjects in question we ensure that each subject taught, either during a different theme in which there is a natural link, or as a discrete unit of work. An overview of the themes taught in each year group is always available on the school website

Discrete Subjects

We teach English and Maths as discrete subjects, with dedicated lessons each day. Wherever possible Literacy will be linked to the theme as we believe that the quality of the work will be enhanced by the expert knowledge and experience that children have in the subject matter. However, particularly during Mathematics, where there is not obvious link then these subjects will be taught discretely.

Extra-curricular activities

We try to have as many extra-curricular activities as we can, as we recognise the benefits they can have to health and well-being. Some activities take place at lunchtime, but others take place after school.

Outdoor Activities and visits Outdoor and Adventurous Activities form part of the delivered PE curriculum. This may involve problem-solving or team-building activities in the school grounds as well as formal activities such as orienteering. In addition we plan for our older children to experience adventurous activities away from the school site, such as use of the climbing wall at our local leisure center. Visits are often planned to enhance the taught curriculum and are designed to excite children's interest and imagination. These may involve visits to museums or theatre or to special activity days. We make regular visits to the local high schools in support of our curriculum, sports and transition.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The curriculum in our school is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend the school. If we think it necessary to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of individual children, then we do so after the parents of the child have been consulted. If a

child has a special need, our school does all it can to meet these individual needs. We comply with the requirements set out in the SEN Code of Practice (July 2014) in providing for children with special needs. If a child displays signs of having special needs, his/her teacher makes an assessment of this need. In most instances the teacher is able to provide resources and educational opportunities which meet the child's needs within the normal class organisation. If a child's need is greater, we if necessary, use the support provided by Teaching Assistants, and we involve the appropriate external agencies.

The Foundation Stage

The curriculum that we teach in the reception class meets the requirements set out in the revised National Curriculum at Foundation Stage. Our curriculum planning focuses on the Early Learning Goals and on developing children's skills and experiences, as set out in this document. Our school fully supports the principle that young children learn through play, and by engaging in well-planned structured activities. Teaching in the reception class builds on the experiences of the children in their pre-school learning. We do all we can to build positive partnerships with the variety of nurseries and other pre-school providers in the area. During the children's first term in the reception class, their teacher completes a base line assessment and records the skills of each child. This assessment forms an important part of the future curriculum planning for each child.

Subject Co-ordination

Maths and Literacy

The school has Maths, English and Science subject leaders and allows non-contact time each term, so that they can carry out the necessary duties involved with their role. It is the role of these leaders to keep up to date with developments in their subject, at both national and local level. They review the way the subject is taught in the school and plan for improvement. This development planning links to whole-school objectives.

Other Subjects

The day to day coordination of all other subjects is performed by the Team Leaders in Years R, 1/2, 3/4 and 5/6. The Team Leaders ensure that the curriculum specified within their team is covered and that the progression made matches that expected for the year groups.

The school also has subject focus groups. These groups are made up of teachers from different phases within the school. The teachers look at a specific subject that the school would like to develop and then co-ordinate changes in practice within the school.

Monitoring and Review

Our governing body monitors the curriculum via the school development, curriculum policy, visits to school and feedback from members of the school community. In this way they are able to ensure that that progress is made in the development and enhancement of our curriculum.

The headteacher is responsible for the day to day organisation of the curriculum. The headteacher and senior staff monitor the lesson plans for all teachers, ensuring that all classes are taught the full requirements of the National Curriculum. Subject Leaders and Team Leaders monitor the way subjects are taught throughout the school.