

The Curriculum

Forest Schools

There is increasing evidence that learning outdoors is highly beneficial to a child's education; the outdoor environment, fresh air and physical activity has a positive impact on health, co-ordination and balance as well as problem solving and teamwork and co-operation. We have been fortunate to have been given permission by Thornton Watlass Hall to use an area of woodland near the school to carry out a Forest School programme. Our Forest School is an opportunity for children to experience outdoor learning in a forest environment in a safe, secure and hands-on way. All pupils take part in Forest School sessions throughout the year. Activities are often linked to the curriculum, encouraging pupils to explore the plants and animals within the wood environment and use the natural materials to, for example, make art work. We have found the development of trust and team working within each session enhances children's social abilities, language and communications skills and serves to build respect for each other and the natural environment.

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

This stage covers children aged 3-5 years old. It is an important stage in moving from pre-school into school and it also prepares children for Year 1. There are 7 areas of learning in this stage and there is a strong emphasis on learning through play. The partnership between the Teacher and Teaching Assistant is very important. They work together to create an atmosphere where each child learns and develops at their own pace.

Assessment of children's progress is an on-going process. Evidence such as samples of work, observations, photographs, parents' and children's comments are collected throughout the year and their achievements are recorded in individual Learning Journeys and Foundation Stage profiles. These are shared with parents towards the end of each term - regularly.

The Foundation Stage is broken down into seven areas of learning:

Communication & Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

Communication & Language

Children are encouraged to listen attentively and to talk about their experiences. Skills are developed through storytelling, following instructions, conveying messages, sharing stories, songs and poems and through the use of role-play and puppet play in a variety of settings.

Physical Development

Physical Development aims to improve children's skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement. Through gym, indoor and outdoor activities, children are encouraged to use a range of small and large equipment, whilst gaining an awareness of space. They will be encouraged to handle simple tools, objects, construction kits and malleable materials safely.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are encouraged to gain confidence and self-respect and to establish relationships with other children and adults. Through a variety of practical activities, they begin to work as part of a group and independently. Children are encouraged to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others and to show respect for others' cultures and beliefs. Taking turns and sharing are developed, as is appropriate behaviour, including the care and concern for living things, property and the environment.

Literacy

Children are encouraged to communicate meaning through pictures, symbols, familiar letters and words. They are given opportunities to write and mark-make independently for a variety of purposes. Through sharing books, children begin to handle them carefully, understand how they are organised and recognise that print is used to carry meaning. They are encouraged to draw on a range of strategies such as context, repetition, phonics and the recognition of familiar words.

Mathematics

Children use mathematical language in a variety of play situations, for example shopping and board games. Work is mainly of a practical nature, which is an important first step in learning. Children will learn to compare, sort, match, order, sequence and count. They learn to recognise and use numbers and carry out practical addition and subtraction. They begin to recognise, describe and make patterns.

Understanding the World

When children are encouraged to talk about their observations and sometimes record them, they begin to ask questions to gain information about why things happen and how

they work. They explore the features of living things, objects and events in the natural and man-made environment, looking closely at similarities and differences, patterns and changes.

Pupils are encouraged to talk about where they live, their families, and past and present events in their own lives. This is supported by stories, artefacts, pictures and photographs. They have the opportunity to become familiar with technology through the use of computers.

Expressive Arts and Design

Through art, music, dance, drama, design and make activities and play activities, children are given the opportunity to use their imagination, to listen and to observe. They use a range of materials, tools and instruments to express their ideas and to communicate their feelings.

The National Curriculum

From the age of 5 up to 16, children follow the National Curriculum. The curriculum we offer is broad and balanced. All the children of statutory school age follow the requirements of the new National Curriculum 2014.

The subjects taught are as follows: -

Core Subjects

English

Mathematics

Science

Information Communication Technology (ICT)

Religious Education

Foundation Subjects

History

Geography

Physical Education

Art and Design

Music

Personal, Social & Health Education & Citizenship (PSHEC)

French



Where possible, teachers plan through a topic based creative approach to the curriculum. This

ensures as many natural links are made to aid the children's learning. Often subjects are taught as a continuum, while others need blocks of time allocated to them. We value first hand experiences and visits, and visitors are encouraged wherever appropriate.

The Department for Education & Skills' (DfES) recommendation is that there should be a teaching week of at least 21 hours for infants (Early Years and Key Stage 1) and 23.5 hours for juniors (Key Stage 2). In Key Stage 1 this time is exceeded, therefore allowing a more flexible and creative approach to certain parts of each day.

Literacy

We believe that an emphasis on Literacy should permeate every aspect of the children's learning. In common with all other state primary schools, approximately one hour each day is devoted to a structured literacy session.

The basic skills of reading and writing, which are then extended to include the ability to infer and deduct, are valued and celebrated. Every effort is made to ensure that children are confident in all the English areas of speaking and listening, reading and writing by the end of their school career.

The role of drama plays an important part in improving children's understanding. There are role-play areas in Foundation Stage and, at times, in Key Stage 1, and in Key Stage 2 drama forms an integral part of classroom activities and *Collective Worship*.

Children are taught to read using a range of techniques and resources, and at a pace, which is appropriate to the child. Pupils begin on wordless books and progress through the use of reading schemes and 'real' books.

Writing is taught to children throughout all Key Stages. They are given opportunities to write using a variety of styles and genres and, at times, can link this in with their knowledge of film. In Key Stage 2, children have a further hour dedicated to extended writing, where they are able to practice new skills and consolidate progress. The teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling is achieved, where possible, through a shared text and consolidated during independent sessions of the Literacy Hour.

By the end of Year 6, children should be proficient readers and writers who are keen to communicate in and understand meaningful texts. They will be able to respond in a positive way, when critically analysing a piece of writing, and be keen to improve on their own work.

We also focus on speaking and listening. There are four strands: speaking, listening, group discussion, and interaction and drama. Learning objectives have been devised by the government which teachers break down in their planning of the children's learning.



Mathematics

Mathematics is of vital importance in everyday life and equips our children with tools that include logical reasoning, problem-solving skills and the ability to think in abstract ways. We follow the national curriculum framework of the Numeracy Strategy for our daily class lessons.

Lessons begin with work to develop and sharpen skills in oral and mental calculations, followed by the main teaching theme, where work may be continued by the whole class, in groups, in pairs or independently. Games, puzzles and problem-solving activities allow pupils to apply the skills they are learning. Paper and pencil methods are introduced gradually and build upon mental strategies. It is important that children enjoy maths and become confident in using special vocabulary, correct notation and applying concepts to everyday situations.

Science

In Science, children are given the opportunity to study a range of topics, which make up the following three areas: physical processes, materials and their properties, and life processes and living things. Children's natural curiosity is harnessed by providing 'hands on' experiences, which form the basis for scientific investigations. Underpinning each topic lies the progressive development of skills in: observing, predicting, hypothesising, measuring, communicating and analysing evidence.

Science work is often linked to other subjects such as maths and technology, which encourages the application of skills, knowledge and understanding.

ICT- Information and Communication Technology

All classrooms have laptops, iPads and whiteboards with the capability to connect to the Internet. Children gain experience developing their skills in control technology, word processing, modelling and graphics, multi-media presentation, e-mail and using particular websites to access information.

ICT enhances children's learning by enabling them to present information and rapidly access ideas and experiences from a wide range of people, communities and cultures. ICT permeates all areas of the curriculum. It has particular uses for supporting children with special educational needs.

Religious Education

Our school ethos is shaped by the importance we give to moral and spiritual development and our Religious Education programme. Religious Education is taught in accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988, 1996 Education Act and the Agreed Syllabus for North Yorkshire. The RE syllabus is multicultural; Christian and non-denominational. It promotes understanding of a range of cultures and beliefs. Christianity is studied as well as elements of Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. Parents who do not want their child to be taught the agreed syllabus have the right to withdraw their children from RE lessons.

Physical Education

We believe that physical activity and good health are intrinsically linked to a balanced and happy life. PE provides opportunities for pupils to be creative, competitive and to face up to different challenges as individuals and in groups and teams. All children have the opportunity to take part in games, athletics, gymnastics and dance. Children also benefit from a weekly swimming lesson in the summer term. In the summer term we hold our sports day.



History and Geography

Children learn, through topics, about human experiences in the past and develop their knowledge and understanding of places, special events and environments. In both subjects they handle evidence, conduct investigations and undertake research to further their knowledge. They are encouraged to make observations and pose their own questions to help them understand historical and geographical terms and skills. Wherever possible, local visits and trips to places further afield are arranged to give children first-hand experiences.



Design and Technology

This is an exciting and practical part of the curriculum, which has close links with Science, Art, Mathematics and ICT. Study areas include textiles, food, structures and control systems. Children develop skills in designing and making, through working with a variety of materials, components and tools, including their safe use. Children are given opportunities to review and assess their own work, through evaluating their finished products and considering the needs of the consumer. Children are involved in setting their own homework. As a class, we devise a half termly/termly Home Learning Grid. The activities cover a range of subjects and creates links across the curriculum. Pupils choose activities to earn a number of points, with high order activities, requiring analysis of facts and skills, earning the most. Evidence of all activities should be brought into class to be shared and celebrated.

On occasion, additional discreet homework will be set to meet a particular need.

All children have access to the website *Mathletics*. This subscription service, which is funded by Friends of the School, allows children to access fun games and skills practice at an appropriate level.

Art and Design

Emphasis in Art is on learning new skills and applications. Children are encouraged to develop their observational and analytical skills from an early age. They experience opportunities to work with a range of media, including clay, textiles, paints, inks and modroc. Alongside this, children are introduced to a range of artists' work and develop an understanding of the techniques and styles employed.

Music

Children are taught to sing and use pitched and unpitched instruments. They are given opportunities to listen to, compose and evaluate music. Children have regular opportunities to perform within the school and participate in school performances within the wider community. The North Yorkshire County Music Service provides peripatetic tuition in violin, brass, guitar and keyboard for older children.

Personal, Social, Health Education & Citizenship

PSHE and Citizenship play an important role in the ethos of our school. We provide children with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active, responsible citizens. Through taking part in a range of activities and experiences (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) children learn to recognise their own worth, respect others and become increasingly responsible for their own learning.

Drugs Education

Drugs Education forms part of our PSHE and Science programme. Pupils are made aware of medicinal, legal and illegal drugs. They will also learn about aspects of the law relating to substance use, consider the potential risks and reasons why people use drugs. Pupils are informed of people who can help with their concerns about drugs; including medicines, tobacco and alcohol. Staff are trained to deal with any issues in a sensitive, factual way aimed at a level appropriate to the age of the children. By giving children this education it is hoped that they will develop positive attitudes and the confidence to assess risks and make informed choices about their personal health and safety.

Sex Education

Sex education has a broad definition and is taught as part of the National Curriculum. Positive and informed attitudes towards issues such as growing up, family and relationships are a mainstay of our programme. Personal safety, high self-esteem and decision-making are all important aspects of this work.

Sex education begins in the infant classes with simple routines such as hygiene and naming external parts of the body. Children learn that we begin life as babies and develop into adults over a period of time. Changes at puberty are taught in the upper years of Key Stage 2. Children watch videos and are able to ask questions to the School Nurse who supports teaching staff working with groups of boys or girls which gives them the opportunity to ask questions which they may feel uncomfortable to ask in the presence of the whole class. Should the subjects of contraception, abortion, homosexual behaviour and AIDS arise during any stage, the teacher, while not specifically teaching those subjects, will offer balanced factual information appropriate to the age of the children.

Parents are notified at least two weeks prior to sex education lessons, and have the right to withdraw their children from lessons outside the National Curriculum if they so wish. Sex education can be a sensitive issue and staff will always be glad to discuss the programme of work with parents and share the teaching materials they use.

French

Children learn French and the work has more focus on writing now, aimed at giving children the confidence to make themselves understood in basic matters such as asking for directions or getting service in a shop or cafe when on a visit to France. Children enjoy singing songs in French, playing French games and learning about the French culture.