St Michael’s CE Primary Curriculum Policy

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At St. Michael’s we are very proud of our curriculum, and the breadth of learning that we offer. Our curriculum covers all the elements of the National Curriculum but we feel that we offer experiences and opportunities for our pupils to develop that go far beyond these expectations. However, our children can only access these extended opportunities if they have a secure grasp of the basics and so we teach both English and Maths systematically and with scrupulous attention to the progress of each child.

In Literacy our Key Stage 1 Phonics results are a testament to the effectiveness of our phonics teaching in EYFS and Year 1, with a 2017 pass rate of 96%. In Key Stage 1 and 2 Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling are specifically taught in every class. In 2017, 88% of our pupils were judged to be at or above National in Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation and 46% were judged to be working at greater depth at the end of the Key Stage. This figure was double the National figure.

Our children enjoy reading and listening to stories and we regularly offer added impetus to reading through additional initiatives such as a story tent in the woods and story book assemblies. All classes go to the library weekly, both to read and to be read to and they can visit any time to change their books. Classes have recommended reading lists to encourage a breadth of reading and we are working to promote an understanding of the importance of adults reading to children throughout their primary years. All classes finish the school day with a story read by the teacher, enjoying lengthier books as they progress through the school.

We are firm believers in the power of poetry and the children learn poems to recite on a regular basis. This has become a cornerstone of what we do, and has enhanced the children’s vocabulary and love of the spoken and written word. We use poetry to enhance handwriting and presentation skills and believe that poems learnt by heart will stay with the children throughout their lives.

Writing is a key focus of our curriculum and we recognise the importance of creating stimulating opportunities for children to write independently and at length. We place great importance on making writing purposeful and meaningful to the children and are using writing more in the cross-curricular work that the children all love. The children also worked together on the same story in each class which was then picked apart and the best of every child’s work united to form a published book in our library.

In Maths the demands of the new National Curriculum have been fully adopted. Our teachers provide differentiated work for all our pupils, building on a strong foundation in arithmetic skills. We aim to develop skills in fluency reasoning and problem solving so that our pupils have a foundation for understanding the world, the ability to reason mathematically, an appreciation of the beauty and power of mathematics, and a sense of enjoyment and curiosity about the subject. The expectation is that the majority of pupils will move through the programmes of study at broadly the same pace. However, decisions about when to progress will always be based on the security of pupils’ understanding and their readiness to progress to the next stage. Pupils who grasp concepts rapidly are challenged through being offered rich and sophisticated problems before any acceleration through new content. Those who are not sufficiently fluent with earlier material will consolidate their understanding, through additional practice, before moving on. Our highly skilled and experienced teaching assistants work to provide carefully planned and structured support to groups of children when they are not working with the teacher, ensuring that all children feel supported and stretched in equal measure.
**Pupil Progress** Our Intervention Manager, Teaching Assistants and SEN teacher attend the half-termly pupil progress meetings with the head teacher, and alongside the class teacher the team work together to ensure that individual needs are addressed in carefully targeted steps. St. Michael’s is proud of the detailed planning and structured lessons delivered by the team of experienced teachers, dedicated to the school’s aim to enable every pupil to make individual progress.

**Creative Curriculum** We are immensely proud of our Creative Curriculum, a unique curriculum designed to meet our children’s needs in a changing world and to create above all, lifelong learners who are self-motivated and curious to learn.

Ask any child at St Michael’s and they will explain the Creative Curriculum to you at length and with great enthusiasm. We have adapted our Creative Curriculum to embrace and exceed the demands of the National Curriculum but have maintained our commitment to individual learning within a structured, carefully planned environment. Each term a new title is introduced and the artefacts, non-fiction books, pictures and information provided act as an initial stimulus. Certain skills are planned and taught within each topic, such as chronology, timelines, note-taking or map reading, and then the children have the opportunity to develop and pursue the topic into the areas which most interest them.

In this study time the children are expected to research and record their findings and ultimately present these in a way suited to teach and inform the rest of the class or school. Children are expected to take notes and enhance their own learning, through listening to the presentations of other children at the end of the term. **Our children have keen enquiring minds and become confident and articulate presenters of knowledge.** Each term is enhanced by a trip out or a visitor to the school to bring learning to life, and culminates in a school tour in which the children go to each class to find out what they have been studying and comment on each other’s work. This develops a real sense of pride in achievement and gives the younger children great aspirations for their own future development.

The children explain it best:

“We start off with a box full of things the teacher collects, like for ‘Conflict’ it was in an old suitcase and then we could think about those things and decide what we were most interested in. Some chose Ann Frank and some Winston Churchill and some did rationing and some did the atom bomb.”

“You get to do your own thing and the teacher doesn’t tie you down. You work harder because you know what you need to reach by the end of the session and you can’t blame anyone else or say you couldn’t understand the teacher.”

“It’s a lot interesting! I found out things I didn’t know before, like Brazil basically has 2 capitals! Brasilia is the real capital but nobody is allowed to live there because it is all government owned and Rio is like the proper capital!” (age 7)

“I like listening to other people’s presentations because you learn facts you didn’t know. Some people like working on their own and keeping it secret and it excites me when I am going to find out what they have learnt.”

What is the teacher’s job in the Creative Curriculum time?

“She lets us get on and comes round with ideas and suggestions.”

“She challenges us to do more.”

“She gives us hints and suggestions.”

“She tells us if we have done a suitable amount in the time.”

**Whole School Projects** In addition, each academic year starts and finishes with a whole school cross-curricular project which unites the community and motivates the children to work from the very first day to the very last. These projects have time pressure and presentation deadlines built into them and help develop many of the skills the children will need in the working world, from time-management to self-confidence.

2016 was the Year of the English Garden and in celebration of one of England’s greatest attractions and to mark the 300th anniversary of ‘Capability’ Brown, each class visited a different landscaped garden. As well as having a history focus, our visit promoted photography and art. Each child took photographs, having had a workshop on photography prior to the visit. Every pupil then was taught the art of landscape painting, through a workshop with a National Trust artist, and painted a landscape of their chosen photograph. Each pupil’s art work was displayed in an art exhibition at the end of the project.

The deadline of the whole school open day, on which their work would be proudly displayed, was a great motivator. Every single child produced and displayed work of an incredible standard and went home with something to keep forever.
2017 has started with a bang with our topic: “A Generation Inspired”. This is a look back to the legacy of the 2012 Olympics and is our way of introducing the children to a wide variety of new sports and helping them to understand the power of sport as a personal motivator. At the same time the classes are each taking their own look at the architectural challenges of building an Olympic Park and regenerating an urban landscape. The whole school visited the Olympic Park, swam in the Aquatics Centre, played sports in the Copper Box Arena and finally watched Olympic diver Tom Daley train and then had a talk from him. Invictus athlete Luke Delahunty came to put us through our paces in circuit training and explained what sport had done for him. The project stimulated intense writing in response to these amazing athletes and some exceptional building projects.

In previous years we experienced a very personal commemoration of World War One in the centenary year, when the whole school, and in excess of 50 parents, went to Brookwood Military Cemetery. Three weeks of follow-up work culminated in a final day in which the children displayed their work and their studies of war artists to their parents; marched down to the school field behind a soldier from the Royal Military Academy and laid a field of crosses dedicated to the soldiers they had researched. The whole school then participated in a Commemorative Service in the church, led entirely by the children, singing the war time songs, reciting poems with a moving depth of understanding and reading excerpts from their own war diaries which showed a level of empathy far beyond their years.

“Monarchs and Palaces” saw each class visit a different Royal Palace and study the monarch most closely associated with it; whilst our “World Religions” topic sent each class to visit a place of worship for a different world religion from mosques to mandirs, gurdwaras and cathedrals to Buddhist temples. These are the things that make St. Michael’s a very special place. We want our children to be part of a world of poetry, music and art, to see links between the past and the present and to have a real understanding of their place in a modern world shaped by the past and prepared for the future. We want them to understand the importance of pulling together as a team, the joy of achieving a job well done and to want to keep working for every last minute of their time at school because they cannot resist the lure of the curiosity to learn and the desire to present their work as best they can. This is what makes our children special.

Music
The main aim is to foster pupils’ sensitivity to and enjoyment of music through a variety of individual, group and whole class activities. Music is planned and taught by class teachers throughout the school, and occupies a 20 – 40 minute lesson in the timetable each week. This is augmented by visiting musicians, extra-curricular activities including the choir and daily singing in assembly. All children in Year 4 are taught to play a musical instrument.

Our use of whole school topics extends to music also and we recently studied “Ten Pieces” of classical music and performed these with instruments and created a dance to each. We hired a local theatre for the day and every child had the exhilarating experience of performing on stage to a huge audience. A staff and parent choir also performed on the day, ensuring that no one was left out of this unique experience! In 2016 the whole school went to see Mary Poppins at the theatre and subsequently put on their own performance of the songs and dances from the show. These opportunites are extras to our annual school plays for KS2 and Nativity plays for KS1 which also give every child their moment to shine.

Peripatetic music teachers visit the school each week providing tuition on violin, guitar, piano and keyboard. All children are given opportunities to share their music making in assemblies and concerts.

R.E.
Religious Education at St Michael’s reflects the mainly Christian character of the school but children are also taught about other major world religions as well as important religious figures. Children are encouraged to develop their own religious experience and understanding, through discussion, reflection, drama and religious stories from both Christian and major world religions.

Collective Worship
The children take part in daily collective worship, either in class or in the school hall. Reverend John Castle, Rector of St Michael’s and All Angels Church, leads the worship once a week. Parents are invited to celebration assemblies and to events such as Harvest Festival, and Easter and Christmas services which are held in the church. The children have opportunities for prayer at the end of the school day and before lunch.

Foreign Languages
At St Michael’s we have chosen Spanish as our taught foreign language. The Spanish language has become increasingly important world-wide, it is a language taught in all of our secondary schools and many of our families choose Spain as a holiday destination. Our KS2 pupils have up to an hour of Spanish learning per week and the teachers follow the Bracknell Forest Foreign Languages Scheme of Work and Guidance. Language learning increases the social and cultural experience of the children and improves their awareness of how languages work and compare to English. It has the added benefit of developing speaking and listening skills for all pupils.

Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE)
PSHCE is the foundation of learning in our school. It underpins the teaching of all subjects and is an integral part of the whole curriculum. Learning about PSHE and Citizenship enables children to become healthy, independent and responsible members of society. We educate the children to develop responsible attitudes and awareness of their personal safety so that they can grow into happy healthy adults. We teach them about rights and responsibilities. They also learn to appreciate what it means to be a positive member of a diverse, multicultural society. This involves them:

Understanding relationships Our children develop an appreciation of the impact that their personal behaviour has on others and how to resolve issues of moral conflict when they arise. We use pupil peer mediators to help resolve conflicts.

Building relationships Rich opportunities are provided for children to develop a wealth of relationships in differing contexts, crossing gender and age barriers and emphasising the strength of diversity and celebrating the uniqueness of the individual. Our Buddy system pairs a Year 5 child with each new entrant to the school in the Reception class, building a reassuring relationship that endures. In addition our Reception children also bridge the age gap by visiting a local elderly care home on a weekly basis to share in art, craft, music and cooking activities.

Developing relationships We provide opportunities for children to relate to others appropriately, developing the emotional skills to allow them to promote mature and fulfilling relationships based on empathy and understanding of others. Our residential outdoor pursuits programme allows the children to demonstrate these skills at their very best, supporting one another (and the staff!) through the toughest of challenges.

Teamwork The children learn to understand how teams operate and the variety of roles needed for teams to be effective. They experience managing and being managed by others and learn to work alongside and develop the skills and talents in others.

Global Awareness and Responsibility The children learn to take the skills they have developed at a local and personal level into the wider arena of caring for those they may never meet. They learn to appreciate that the decisions they make about their own lifestyle can have a profound effect on the lives of others around the world. We collect ‘Love in a Box’ gifts for children in Eastern Europe, run cross country events for Sport Relief, bake cakes for Red Nose day, do household jobs to help re-roof our church and have organised events to support the annual charity of the children’s choice and respond to major world events which require our help. Our children and parents are incredibly supportive and give very generously of their time and money.

Cultural Appreciation Our curriculum offers children a full and rich understanding of their own heritage and culture, whilst developing a healthy respect for the cultural traditions of others. Through bringing visitors from other cultures into school the children acquire an appreciation of the way others do things and recognise that these differences add to the richness of the world.

Computing
We have a dedicated ICT suite. The computing curriculum is divided into three main areas: computer science, information technology and digital literacy. It prepares the children to understand and change the world through logical thinking and creativity, making explicit links with maths, science and design technology. It prepares our children for the future by getting them to understand how digital systems work, equipping pupils to create programs...
and systems for a range of media. It ensures that they become digitally literate young people, enabling them to use and express their ideas in a safe environment with a vital emphasis on the area of online-safety.

**Cooking**

Children from each class cook and prepare wholesome savoury food on a weekly basis. We are currently saving to buy a new fully stocked kitchen classroom to replace the small cookery area currently available.

**Art**

Art is an important foundation subject and as such is taught and experienced throughout school. It is used not only as a form of communication but also as a form of expression. Our aims in teaching art are to:

- build on the artistic skills, experience and understanding which the child already possesses.
- encourage the child to find enjoyment, fulfilment, and achievement throughout art, craft and design and see themselves as artists, designers and craft workers.
- develop skills to use a range of materials, techniques and tools effectively and competently.
- feel able to express their ideas, feelings and experiences from life and society creatively.
- develop an appropriate vocabulary to help them discuss their own work and that of others.
- appreciate and evaluate the work of a range of artists from both their own and other cultures.
- develop accuracy and patience whilst working in any form of artistic medium.
- see the presentation of all forms of work, written or pictorial as an art form and to develop graphic art styles to improve the appearance of their work.
- enable children to express inner feelings and concerns.

These aims are achieved by developing the child’s artistic skills and encouraging them to explore their imaginations and the reality of the world around them through artistic expression.

**Design and Technology** gives the children opportunities to design, make and modify products. They are encouraged to discuss and reflect on their work, to justify the ideas, materials and techniques they have used and to propose modifications and improvements. The children are encouraged to be inventive, using a range of materials and tools, thus developing, modifying and evaluating their ideas through a series of projects. During Design and Technology lessons, we actively promote a healthy attitude to safety through teaching correct procedures when using tools and equipment.

**Science** Through teaching science we aim to ensure that all pupils:

- develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding through the specific disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics.
- develop understanding of the nature, processes and methods of science through different types of science enquiries that help them to answer scientific questions about the world around them.
- are equipped with the scientific knowledge required to understand the uses and implications of science, today and for the future.

Pupils are also taught how to ‘work scientifically’, building on these skills each year in the context of the various topics covered. Pupils learn to use a variety of approaches to answer relevant scientific questions. These types of scientific enquiry include: observing over time; pattern seeking; identifying, classifying and grouping; comparative and fair testing (controlled investigations); and researching using secondary sources. Pupils are encouraged to seek answers to questions through collecting, analysing and presenting data.

**Outdoor Education**

St Michael’s is unique in its approach to Outdoor Education. Our youngest class spend a morning each week in local woods, walking and climbing, discovering nature and letting their imaginations roam in the wonders of the ever changing environment. Our children walk miles, run endlessly up and down hills and have a real appreciation of the reality of the changing seasons and the natural world. Throughout the school the children continue to go to the woods at least once every half term and bring their curriculum to life there; painting, poetry writing, bringing science to life or learning how to cook outdoors. They learn to assess risks for themselves and to understand their place in the world.
in a way which Ofsted inspectors described as truly unique.
We have days when we take the whole school to the woods and let the older children and the younger children work on projects together; when we all walk to the local park and organise sponsored runs; when we all trudge down to the allotments and see the real meaning of harvest before participating in the Harvest festival; when we walk round every church in Sandhurst to find out the similarities and differences, when the Ducklings and their parents have a family day on the beach. We want to make our learning real and meaningful and very firmly believe that leaning does not stop at the classroom door.

**Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC)**

School is about far more than learning the curriculum. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development is the term used to embrace this broader dimension.

- **Spiritual**: Explore beliefs and experience; respect values; discover oneself and the surrounding world; use imagination and creativity; reflect.
- **Moral**: Recognise right and wrong; understand consequences; investigate moral and ethical issues; offer reasoned views.
- **Social**: Use social skills in different contexts; work well with others; resolve conflicts; understand how communities work.
- **Cultural**: Appreciate cultural influences; participate in culture opportunities; understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity.

At St Michael’s CE Primary School, we recognise the importance of developing Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural opportunities within all areas of the curriculum and throughout the school day. Lessons are planned and delivered with SMSC opportunities included in them and assemblies and visitors to the school provide further enrichment of SMSC opportunities within our school. PSHE provision covers all non-statutory curriculum guidelines and also includes SRE and Drugs Education lessons. Teachers personalise the PSHE curriculum for the needs of their class and we endeavour to ensure our curriculum is responsive to the needs of our whole school community.