



## **St Stephen's CofE First School Rationale for curriculum design**

At CRST our aim is to improve the life chances of all our pupils through a broad and balanced academic curriculum. Our motivation is to develop confident and creative young people who can thrive in a changing world. Our curriculum vision is inclusive, well -designed and coherently sequenced in order to establish a strong foundation for all our pupils.

This rationale explains the principles of how we have designed the curriculum for our pupils in KS1 and KS2 and how these principles underpin our selection of the things we want them to learn.

St Stephen's CofE First School is a Church of England school serving a multicultural community, we use our Christian values to bring our communities together. In the words of Paul Lawlor, our Vicar, "We Walk together in difference." Our values focus our community and inform how we interact with each other, the bedrock of how we build character, spirituality, and community cohesion.

We are blessed to serve a multi-cultural community where fourteen different languages are spoken. It is crucial that our curriculum both enables and teaches acquisition of the English language. Our curriculum is rich with life experiences and exposure to cultural capital, from which children make connections between what they are learning and the structure of how English is spoken, read and written.

Hearing people speak in English using full sentences is not commonplace in parts of our community and this becomes a barrier with many of our children struggling to form sentences correctly using well-chosen vocabulary. For this reason, we demand that our teachers use and expect our pupils to answer in full sentences, when speaking, to enable the children to hear the rhythm of a well-formed sentence in English. This supports our pupils with pronunciation too. Repetition of this key skill through rigorous and methodical modelling is apparent in our everyday practice.

Having the confidence and fluency to speak English for authentic purposes and communication is only possible through continuous and well-planned language acquisition. Rich experiences lie at the heart of language acquisition, alongside a broad pedagogy exposing children to a wide range of vocabulary, sometimes disciplinary and sometimes multi-disciplinary.

The rigorous repetition of early reading and appropriate teaching strategies to foster this are the other central feature in our curriculum. The school has invested heavily in good quality texts and phonics resources to support the teaching of early reading. We have a structured approach to this with clear end of year expectations for phonic awareness, fluency, and comprehension. We encourage a love of reading both at home and at school, with parents seen as integral partners.

We aim to prepare children for next stage of education by rigorously teaching reading, spelling, grammar and mathematics to enable them to access a broad and balanced curriculum.

Each subject within the curriculum has a further subject-specific rationale which demonstrates how we have selected what we want pupils to learn in each subject and how we have chosen the order in which to teach this so that pupils make progress in their learning.

Our overall curriculum design is underpinned by our vision for what the pupils in our communities need to thrive and become confident learners. Our curriculum offer identifies the **Knowledge, Attribute, Skills** and **Experiences** we seek to develop in our pupils.

Our curriculum design begins with **knowledge**. The first driver for our planning is to develop expertise by ensuring that pupils master, over time, the key substantive and conceptual knowledge within each subject discipline. We think of **knowledge** as consisting of

- **Substantive knowledge** – the substance of each unit of learning and its associated vocabulary, connected through the subject to other units by **substantive concepts** – the “big ideas” of each subject. Our planning is underpinned by a “big picture” of the subject which includes, but is not limited to the outlines of substantive knowledge specified in the National Curriculum.
- **Disciplinary knowledge** – the way in which the thinking in each subject develops as pupils build more substantive knowledge, what are commonly thought of as the subject specific skills – the ways of knowing or “know-how” - of each subject domain.

The design of the curriculum within each subject is characterised by the relationship between **substantive** and **disciplinary knowledge**, interwoven and built over time and developmentally appropriate to age and stage. Knowing more, remembering more and making conceptual connections differs in each subject. Some subjects work to a hierarchy of substantive knowledge and concepts, while others build knowledge cumulatively and pupils revisit substantive concepts, deepening their knowledge and understanding as they do so. Each subject rationale makes explicit how the elements are woven together. From this, in our school, we plan the order and sequence of how this knowledge will be learned through detailed medium term and unit plans.

We believe that, for our pupils, we need to make explicit how we design learning opportunities to promote key **attributes** which are associated with developing an appetite and a thirst for learning. Pupils need to see models of how these attributes are key to higher achievement and pride in their work. As they gain more knowledge, they are changed by what they learn and they grow more detailed and conceptual connections (“schemata”) within subject disciplines. They are also changed by the process of learning and, as we make explicit in our design, assign value to their own and one another’s personal **attributes**.

For the same reason, we have identified a range of **skills** which are characteristics of effective learning. The **substantive** and **disciplinary knowledge** within each subject provides a framework for how pupils get better and make progress in that subject developing subject skills. These characteristics of effective learning are drivers of pedagogical design. We place particular emphasis on the development of exploratory talk and of reasoning to apply the substantive vocabulary pupils are learning in different subjects (fluency and communication).

**Experiences** of activities, visits to places and encounters with people or background context provide stimulus for and models of how knowledge is gained and used for purpose. The design and planning of our curriculum makes explicit the weaving in of authentic **experiences** which give pupils the opportunities to see where knowledge and learning can take them.