

St Thomas of Canterbury RC Primary School

Whole school Curriculum Design

Aims and rationale

The three key aims of our curriculum are:

- **Reading – The curriculum ensures all pupils become fluent, confident readers**
- **Inclusion – The curriculum enables all pupils, including those with Special Needs and Disadvantaged pupils to make excellent progress**
- **Character Development – The curriculum forges a strong work ethic amongst all pupils who exhibit the determination and perseverance needed to become successful learners**

Our curriculum has been thoughtfully and carefully structured to meet the specific needs of our learners; to enable them to overcome barriers, build upon existing interests and strengths and develop knowledge and understanding across subjects in a structured, sequential manner. We recognise that nearly all our children come from areas of high deprivation. Basic skills, especially speaking and listening, reading, writing and number are low on entry. Therefore the progress journey our children are on to reach Secondary School readiness is greater than elsewhere. Our curriculum has been structured to meet the specific challenges our pupils present whilst at the same time building upon their strengths.

Reading is the golden thread through our curriculum. Our curriculum prioritises this aspect of learning above all else because we know that only through reading can children access the wider curriculum successfully. We offer a highly structured programme of phonics teaching, alongside the development of comprehension skills and the deliberate sharing of the highest quality literature all with the specific aim of developing a real love of reading. Regular reading opportunities are systematically planned into a wide range of subjects. It is precisely because our school places such a high priority on the quality of its reading provision, that we offer a broad and balanced curriculum. We recognise that only through the development of a deep and broad knowledge base will pupils over time become able to comprehend fully what they read. Our curriculum design aims to create a virtuous cycle of improvement as gains to reading comprehension makes access to other subjects ever greater.

Our curriculum aims to be inclusive and to leave no child behind. We have the highest aspirations for all children which is encapsulated in our Mission Statement – “Together with God, we reach for the stars.” Leaving individual pupils or groups behind because of a particular status – SEND, Pupil Premium, EAL, gender, ethnicity or any other protected characteristic is anathema to us as followers of Christ. We aim to make our curriculum design highly flexible, recognising pupils within the same class will not all have the same starting points or needs and that through curriculum adaptations and inclusive practice all can progress in their learning.

Successful, deep learning should not be easy. The school’s curriculum is deliberately highly ambitious and challenging and aims to embed a strong work ethic, perseverance and determination amongst all pupils. These character traits underpin all success both at school and in the world of work.