

# CURRICULUM POLICY



## **INCLUDING EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

*To be read in tandem with the Teaching and Learning, PSHE and SEND/IEAL Policies*

### **Introduction**

The curriculum at Birchfield School is organised to help all pupils learn and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught. It takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), those for whom English is an Additional Language and those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) as well as young carers and looked after children, where applicable. Provision is also made for those learners who are gifted and talented to ensure an appropriate level of challenge thanks to the small groups and subject specialist teaching. For these pupils, Individual Education or Monitoring Plans may be created and shared or one to one tuition e.g The Star Programme may be provided for those with an EHC Plan provision. Our Learning Enhancement department offers both individual and group sessions with pupils, as appropriate. For gifted pupils, sessions such as advanced reading groups or specialist mathematics intervention is made available, as required.

Care is taken to ensure that the plans and schemes of work actively promote and do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. For example, teaching in History and Religious Studies does not promote non-democratic political systems which disregard English civil or criminal law.

It includes not only the formal requirements of the National Curriculum, but also a range of extra-curricular activities that the school organises in order to enrich the children's experience. It also includes the 'hidden curriculum' – what the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. Our pupils grow into positive, responsible people who can work and co-operate with others while at the same time developing their knowledge and skills, in order to achieve their full potential.

Our school curriculum is underpinned by the values that are important at Birchfield School. The curriculum is the means by which the school achieves its objective of educating children in the knowledge, skills and understanding they need for the future.

### **Aims**

The aims of our school curriculum are :

(a) that a full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age is offered, which gives experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education;

## **The Organisation of the Curriculum**

The curriculum is taught through discrete subjects and linked 'topic' areas where relevant. Pupils are given experience in the following areas and adults are available to support pupils as necessary :

### **Linguistic :**

Pupils develop communication skills and increase their command of language through listening, speaking, reading and writing. Lessons take place in written and spoken English. French is also taught from Reception to GCSE by a subject specialist. European Day of Languages is celebrated annually in school and various language clubs e.g Spanish run during or after school.

### **Mathematical :**

Pupils learn to make calculations, to understand and appreciate relationships and patterns in number and space and to develop their capacity to think logically and express themselves clearly. They are given experience of practical activity, exploration and discussion. Problem Solving and Times Tables lessons are scheduled weekly in the Prep School.

### **Scientific:**

Pupils develop a greater knowledge and understanding of nature, materials and forces and with developing the skills associated with science as a process of enquiry: for example, observing, forming hypotheses, conducting experiments and recording their findings. They are taught by a subject specialist from Year 3 in a Science Laboratory, supported by a technician. Lessons may also take place in the DT/Art Room as part of an Enrichment or Project Based learning timetabled focus.

### **Technological :**

Pupils have experience of technological skills, through such areas as Design Technology, Food Technology and Computing/Computer Science, delivered by subject specialists. They learn to develop, plan and communicate ideas; working with different electronic devices, tools, equipment, materials and components to produce good quality products; and evaluating processes and products. Pupils have access to various tools such as drills and saw as well as 3D and laser printers in the Design Technology room. Clubs in Lego and Coding have helped to raise awareness of early robotics and design. Pupils from Reception upwards have access to tablets to enhance learning and Years 7 and above have access to a class set of personal laptops. Food Technology lessons are timetabled for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and Pre-Prep/Senior pupils use the Food Technology Room on ad hoc basis. Pupils have access to digital technology through Computing lessons and Computer Science GCSE as well as the

use of iPads and through Griffin Learning, the school's remote learning programme. Please refer to the school's separate procedure on Digital Safeguarding within the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy.

### **Human and Social :**

Here, pupils are given knowledge through History and Geography as well as Religious Studies about people and their environment, and learn how human action, now and in the past, has influenced events and conditions. Religious Studies is also promoted through spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and taught as a weekly lesson in all years from Reception upwards. PSHE is taught weekly with a focus upon Relationships Education throughout the year groups up to Year 6 (and as PSED in Reception) and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) in Years 7 and above.

### **Physical :**

Pupils learn physical control and coordination as well as their tactical skills and imaginative responses and to help them to evaluate and improve their performance. They also learn about the basic principles of fitness and health. This is further enhanced by our Forest Schools and Outdoor Learning programme from Reception to Year 2. An hour of PE is timetabled weekly for all pupils with additional Games sessions for 3 hours per week also from Year 2 upwards. In Year 9, Games periods are two hours per week as well as PE. PE lessons take place both in the Hall and outside. Swimming lessons are provided either for two terms or one and a half term's depending upon the pupils' age for pupils in Reception to Year 6.

### **Aesthetic and Creative :**

Pupils are given experience of the processes of making, composing and inventing across the whole range of subjects, but primarily in art, music, dance, drama and the study of literature, because they call for personal, imaginative, and often practical, responses. Pupils take part in regular performances on the stage through House Music, termly drama productions and concerts. Purpose-built rooms for Music and Art as well as Design Technology support learning and are taught to pupils by subject specialists. Pupils in Years 3 to 8 have timetabled Enrichment/Project Based Learning lessons to extend their learning on topics such as Architecture, Sustainability as well as increase their digital literacy.

Long term plans are in place covering each academic year; medium term plans are in place and they contain the detail of the work covered with a progression of learning objectives; short term plans are written daily in a diary format. They also show differentiation, evaluation and learning objectives. The pupils are taught with their year groups generally, although gifted pupils work with individual plans, where appropriate. Reading extension groups run in Years 1-3, as needs vary, to offer a further sense of challenge.

(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;

Pupils have exposure to drama skills via English and extra-curricular LAMDA lessons (Years 3 and above) and vocabulary lessons in the Prep School. They receive daily English and Mathematics lessons from Reception upwards and Reception children practise communication and language through role play activities. Problem-solving is actively taught in Years 3 to 6 to support mathematical understanding.

(c) a personal, social, health (and economic) education which reflects the school's aim and ethos and encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act;

All pupils receive weekly PSHE lessons (including Relationships Education or Relationship and Sex Education as detailed above), PSED being taught in Reception weekly and these are supplemented by the School's assembly programme. The School is mindful to protect the following characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

(d) for pupils receiving secondary education access to accurate up to date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner; enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options and helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.

Pupils in Year 7 and 8 follow a leadership programme of enrichment with opportunities for career workshops and masterclasses as well as parent talks. Senior pupils have the chance to get involved in fund-raising, charities and volunteering as well as regular outings to venues such as Kidzania. Career talks are open to Year 5 upwards. Talks and workshops about careers are to be shared with our sister school for students in Year 9 and above. Parents are invited in on a regular basis to share their expertise on their occupations with Years 5 and above.

(e) for pupils above compulsory school age, a programme of activities is offered which is appropriate to their needs;

In addition to the standard lessons, pupils of different ages receive instruction in Food Technology, Lego Mathematics in certain years and Enrichment. The extra-curricular programme is broad and offers before, lunchtime and after-school clubs for pupils from Reception upwards e.g Fencing, Karate, Coding, Football. An outside classroom off the Reception teaching space allows for variety in learning in different environments. Lunchtime clubs are also on offer.

(f) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress;

Learning and progress are monitored through pupil progress meetings, tracking systems and assessment overseen by the Head of Prep and Head of Senior School. Older pupils discuss Pupil Passports with LE staff and senior school students have regular meetings with their personal tutors. Personal tutors are assigned to older pupils.

(h) to offer pupils effective preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society by developing in every young person the values, skills

and behaviours they need to get on in life and offering a rich provision of classroom and extra-curricular activities that develop a range of character attributes, such as resilience and grit, which underpins success in education and future employment.

Assembly and PSHE programmes are linked to our school values, The Birchfield Way.

Similarly, we aim to foster in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to learn and think for themselves as well as to appreciate and value the contribution made by all ethnic groups in our multicultural society. We promote an awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and one which enables pupils to have respect for themselves and to have high self-esteem.

The curriculum is planned effectively, providing continuity and progression. Time is carefully managed in lessons and the inclusion of subject specialists in the core subjects from Year 4 upwards allows for good knowledge and understanding of the subject being taught.

Assessment records are measured through use of the school's assessment package, which is used formally in the Spring Term for reading and spelling and in the Summer Term for GL Mathematics and English from Year 2 upwards. In addition, there are regular half-termly and end of unit assessment programmes from Year 3 upwards. Targets are set accordingly and reported in termly reports to parents. High expectation is made of behaviour standards in order that pupils can make progress and learn effectively.

Through the provision of a range of activities we aim to :

- (i) encourage the highest levels of attainment for all pupils in respect of ability, need and aptitude;
- (ii) enable pupils to begin to make connections across different areas of learning;
- (iii) help pupils to think creatively and solve problems by applying their knowledge;
- (iv) develop pupils' capacity to learn and work both independently and collaboratively;
- (v) enable pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenge and responsibility;
- (vi) enable pupils to acquire and develop a broad range of knowledge, skills and understanding.

## **Curriculum and Themed Days**

The whole school participates in regular curriculum themed days as well as other enrichment days to enhance learning. Each activity is based upon a main subject focus (e.g. Mathematics, Art/DT, English and Geography) or value e.g Resilience, Mindfulness and is carefully planned to include as many cross-curricular aspects as possible. The children are encouraged to work in a variety of ways, including individual, paired and group work as well as vertical groups. Practical work forms a large part of these events. Outings are encouraged to supplement the curriculum. Pre-Prep also run regular themed days to develop their learning, such as Marvellous Me Day centring around well-being, exercise and health with Reception scheduling their own themed days twice per half-term. Senior School pupils receive regular workshops to enhance their learning in PSHE e.g Digital Safety, Bullying.

## **Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum underpins all the work done in the Reception Class at Birchfield School. The detailed curriculum is planned in line with the EYFS regulations and framework and, for pupils below compulsory school age, offers a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development as well as communication and language skills. In addition, children have Music, French and Computing sessions weekly. The free flow area off the Reception teaching space offers variety in learning formats and a wide range of outdoor learning areas such as the woodland Dell offer chances to explore learning in the natural world. Under the guiding theme of Learning and Development there are three prime areas of learning:

- (i) Communication and Language
- (ii) Physical Development
- (iii) Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

There are a further four specific areas:

- (i) Literacy
- (ii) Mathematics
- (iii) Understanding the World
- (iv) Expressive Arts and Design

All areas of learning are of equal importance and are delivered in conjunction with each other. The development of each child is recorded through the use of assessment scales which provide an accurate and detailed insight into the progress made by the individual children.

### **11+ Preparation**

Pupils in Years 3 to 6 inclusive receive instruction in vocabulary as well as problem-solving in addition to other English and Mathematics lessons which act to support the preparation for those pupils sitting 11+ entrance examinations and also support wider skills. Parents are supported with additional resources, as needed.

### **Pupils in Years 7 and above**

Pupils follow a programme of study based upon the National Curriculum and linked to that of our sister school for GCSE readiness in future years. The programme of study also combines with the high standards of learning for the Common Entrance programme of study which runs over two years for those students considering scholarship entrance to another senior school at 13. Students staying at Birchfield School until age 16 benefit from a three year GCSE programme of study and select their options at the end of Year 8. The programme is overseen by the Head of Senior School. They also develop skills in leadership, volunteering and cultural awareness. As well as a residential camp experience, pupils have access to such opportunities as First Aid training, financial training on budgeting and saving and exposure to early career advice given by guest speakers visiting the school. Advice is

impartial and helps to give pupils information for them to fulfil their potential in years to come.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Headmistress and Head of Prep and Head of Senior School have responsibility for the leadership of the curriculum with overview also from Head of Pre-Prep, who oversees the Early Years curriculum. Responsibility for individual subject areas is delegated to key members of staff and subject co-ordinators are responsible for monitoring the medium-term plans and liaising with class teachers over the content and delivery of the units of work. They regularly evaluate and monitor standards in their subject and check planning is up to date at the beginning of the year. Class teachers ensure that the curriculum is taught and that the aims are achieved for their class as well as ensuring that the progress of each pupil is tracked and that there is appropriate challenge, support and intervention.