

# St. James' C of E Primary School

## Our Curriculum

Our curriculum is designed to develop the whole child. Fundamentally, it is based on our values and the skills we believe our children need to be equipped with for their futures. Subjects including music, art and computing are explored through themes that have drivers based in history, geography and science which 'hook' children, in particular the boys.

Every term the children will explore a new theme within their phase, corridors and classrooms emphasise content and help to immerse children in their theme. Mathematics, writing and reading are often also explored through this theme giving it purpose e.g. In our theme about Isambard Kingdom Brunel - biographies are written about key Victorian engineers, scientists and the children explore concepts of time linked to train timetables. In our theme about penguins the children write descriptions about penguins and their habitats and measure and compare the sizes of different types of penguins. You will see evidence of this in our classrooms.

Our values based curriculum is woven into our themes and the children are encouraged to look for ways of demonstrating these. E.g. Perseverance is often linked to learning new skills in PE, working on making our handwriting better or even more specific, in the ways in which Isambard Kingdom Brunel persevered to build the railways.

Each term the theme takes and approach linked to enterprise, charity, global awareness or our local community stop help prepare pupils for life beyond school. E.g. children in year 1 set up a ground force day to develop their outdoor classroom area and the growing and then selling of plants promotes an understanding of enterprise. Year 5 were also given the opportunity to grow a pound! They did this particularly well. This is an area that is rapidly growing and has started to become part of our curriculum ethos.

More able children and those with specialist areas of interest are invited to involve adults from outside the school in their area of gift or talent to deepen and further learning - taking responsibility to organise events and use their talent in a different way.

Due to the use of ICT equipment and computers as a growing resource, the children, through all themes engage in being safe. Children have opportunities to visit meaningful places such as experiencing the awe and wonder of the literacy festival and science festival (when their teacher was blown up!) these lead to excellent opportunities back at school.

In mathematics, whilst the school ensures meaningful links are made to other curriculum areas to demonstrate real purpose, we are also embarking on a new philosophy to the teaching of maths. Pupils in years 1, 3 and 4 are starting to adopt a Singapore maths style through an action research study into text book use. The over arching philosophy is that pupils explore a problem that leads to learning opportunity being developed so that all pupils are engaged in developing their own learning, setting their own learning objectives and managing their challenge. Learning is 'journalled' rather than structured. As we go we are evaluating its impact and in time, if it is a success we will roll out to all year groups. The general view is that pupils move along the journey together. In years 1 and 3 pupils are taught as a mixed group but in year 4 they are split into two ability groups (this is historic in KS2). Children who have not grasped the concepts taught that day/week will be able to revisit elements to secure learning in the afternoons so that all pupils are ready for their next lesson. Deeper learning in maths and the ability to develop pupils learning behaviours and risk taking are key to how we teach maths with children being prepared from early on to be involved in thinking differently and our work in PSHCE and RE support and scaffold this effectively with children asking big questions.

The school plans theme/subject days to enrich key curricula areas together. An art week across the school gave children the opportunities to develop different and varied skills, showcasing their work in our whole school gallery to parents and further at The Wilson Museum and Gallery in Cheltenham Town Centre. Teachers plan opportunities to develop other subjects alongside art e.g. Children wrote their literacy work in their sketch books linked to how the art made them feel, they created Mondrian inspired art work and calculated area and perimeter in maths and considered plant names when creating Andy Goldsworthy sculptures. A maths week had a huge impact in developing an understanding of 'reasons for maths' with children being asked to explore maths through other curriculum areas and their year group themes - it included a maths workshop for parents that was well attended. The children spoke fondly about developing their maths skills across other subjects with Annabelle saying; I enjoyed creating Mondrian art then calculating area of colour, it gave a fun reason to use our maths!

The fencing taster day, day of coding, European day of languages and fair trade fortnight also added a flavour to our school. Our poetry festival in term 1 as a result of National Poetry Day saw children creating and sharing their poems with other classes - pupils and parents say that they really enjoy these days.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and all subject leaders apply great rigour in developing their subject area, staff receive high quality CPD, support and discussion and we aim that all staff have time to develop their subject as appropriate.