

St James Church of England Primary School



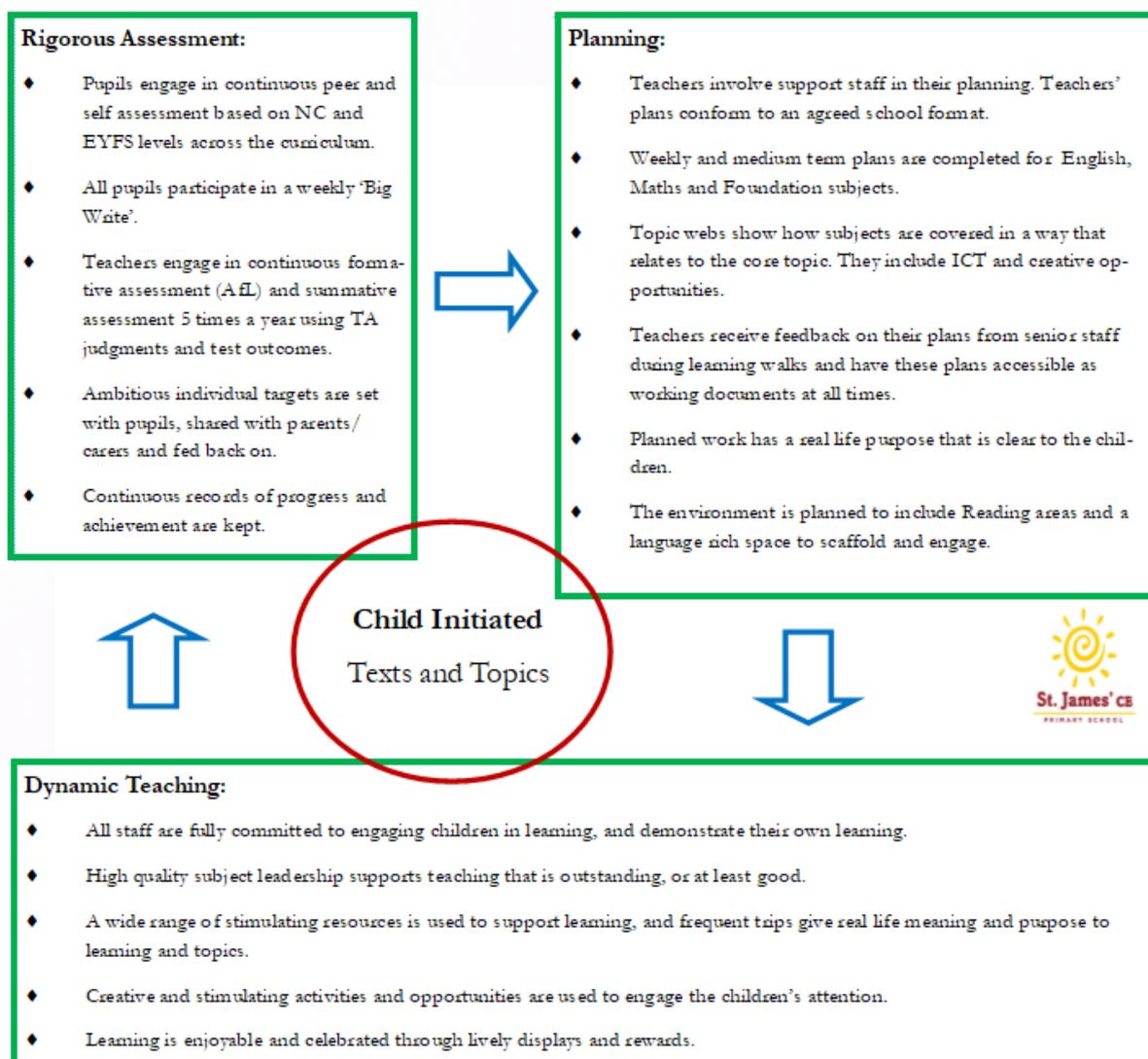
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Teaching & Learning and Curriculum Guidance



At St. James' CE Primary school we believe our child-centred, creative curriculum is the best way to engage and enthuse all children in the learning process. Our aim is to utilise the benefits of using creative approaches to build a curriculum that meets the requirements of the statutory curriculum (National Curriculum 2014), raises standards and engages and enthuses our children.

Our ethos is charted in our Teaching and Learning model:



Our Creative Curriculum:

Creativity is, or should be, purposeful, imaginative and of added value. If we adjust this definition for our curriculum, then we could propose a definition of our creative curriculum as one that:

- Has clear educational purpose,
- Is delivered with imagination,
- Has measurable educational value.

This definition gives three steps to take us through the process of curriculum development.

Step 1: Educational Purpose

What do we need to teach?

Rather than subjects driving the curriculum, we believe the needs of our children should determine the emphasis. It's important that children learn what's in the statutory curriculum, but we believe children need much more than this. Balancing children's needs with the statutory curriculum will always be a challenge, but instead of the two acting in opposition we can ensure the content of the curriculum meets the needs of children and fulfils statutory requirements.

They should relate to:

- The needs of our children,
- The needs of our community,
- The values of our school,
- The location and context of our school.

By reflecting the needs of our children and what they believe is right for them, we strive to prioritise context.

What is statutory?

The statutory curriculum – what we have to cover in our schools – is set out in the National Curriculum (2014). Within each programme of study comprises the essential knowledge, skills and understanding within subjects. This part of the curriculum leads to progress. We look at this part of the statutory curriculum closely and rigorously when planning for measurable educational value.

Step 2: Imagination

The planning for how the curriculum is to be delivered is essential to engaging and inspiring children. The following thematic approach to planning, and how to ensure that all the skills that the children need to acquire, are covered:

Real Life Purposes:

The more real the learning experience, the more likely it is that children will engage. We endeavour to make the themes and topics real to our children – not too abstract or too far removed from their experiences. If something is based in the past, for example, we try to think of the legacy it has left and start with that.

Stimuli for work: a visit, visitors, artefacts, books, videos, situations, plays, etc. The wider the range of stimuli, the more likely it is that children will engage with the theme.

Provocation:

By planning a topic web at the beginning of each topic, we ensure educational purpose, with the content navigated by the children.

We try to provoke children into taking an interest in both what we've planned for them, and related things that they find interesting along the way. This is achieved by asking children what they would like to learn. While this is at the centre of all we do, we also acknowledge we must provoke and suggest material to expose children to other worlds and themes they may not know about already.

- We try to use a stimulus at the beginning of the theme to provoke lines of enquiry from the start,
- We try to allow the children's enquiries to steer the theme's direction,
- We respond to lines of enquiry that come up later in the theme – not all children will be provoked at the same time.

Allow time and space:

If we are to provoke lines of enquiry, then children need space and time to follow them.

- We plan rigorously for questioning and grammar, punctuation and spelling development to be focused upon within all lessons, but also allow time for progress checks and movement throughout lessons to ensure all learning is practical and purposeful,
- We allow time for children to explore their chosen lines of enquiry and reflect upon their learning.

Be Bold and Flexible:

We try not to let timetables get in the way, especially at the 'launch' of a theme or topic. Hence, as a school we provide a 'suggested' weekly timetable for teachers with some key fundamentals, all the while giving class teachers freedom and autonomy to deliver aspects of the curriculum at the children's pace.

- We 'hook' the interest of children and secure their commitment through a dramatic start,
- We pull the theme together at the end to consider the children's learning.

Step 3: Planning for Measurable Educational Value

Simply planning a purposeful and engaging curriculum will not raise standards alone. It will ensure the content is thorough and that children are engaged. Another step is needed – this is to plan for what we and our children want the pupils to accomplish as a result of this purposeful and engaging curriculum. Here we have regular half-termly meetings with senior and middle leaders to ensure data and attainment/progress are at the forefront of all we plan for.

Planning for subject key skills:

Planning for the breadth of study in the National Curriculum is addressed by creating a topic web. The next step is to ensure that the programme of study is not only covered, but also repeated to a progressively higher standard so that children make progress.

We've summarised the programme of study into key skills. These are the essential subject skills children need. There are no more than five key skills in each subject, which means they can be repeated many times. To ensure progression, we've shown standards success criteria from levels and age-related expectations from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 of the National Curriculum.

We believe our unique creative curriculum actively encourages children to:

- Work collaboratively,
- Ask questions,
- Share their ideas,
- Work independently,
- Question and challenge,
- Reflect critically.

Our curriculum:

- Provides secure coverage of the National Curriculum (2014) Programmes of Study,
- Takes into consideration the local context,
- Focuses on skills and content,
- Focuses upon pupils' growth and development as learners.

As a school we have developed and designed many exciting topics, and we continue to create new, child-centred topics to be taught from EYFS to Year 6. We select texts for the children to choose from via the CLPE (Centre for Literacy in Primary Education) and their 'Power of Reading' approach and make these the centre of our learning journey.

Each class has a web-page on our website which provides information on current topics being studied including coverage for each half term.

Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning by:

- Discussing work being covered in school and taking an interest in what's being studied,
- Looking at useful information on curriculum coverage on their class pages,
- Visiting local libraries to look for relevant materials and borrow books.