



St Margaret of Scotland Catholic Primary School

Curriculum Rationale and Intent 2024-2025

The mission statement for St Margaret's school; '**Learning with Jesus in Faith, Hope and Love**' and that for the St Thomas Catholic Academy Trust to which we belong; "**The glory of God is a human being fully alive!**", are taken from the teachings of the Catholic church and Gospel Values. These statements underpin our curriculum as we strive for each individual to be recognised as a child of God by supporting their spiritual, moral, academic, social, emotional and physical development and their mental well-being. This prepares our children for life in modern Britain and for future success. We are fully compliant with the Catholic Bishop's requirement to allocate 10% of our curriculum time to RE.

The curriculum at St Margaret's is designed to ensure all children access a broad, balanced and inclusive education. This enables them to become motivated, curious, creative and critical thinkers, developing an innate passion for learning and it reflects the cultural, socio-economic and varied backgrounds that make up our school community. The curriculum is fully accessible to all children, regardless of their particular needs. We are committed to the principle of anti-discriminatory practice. We promote equality of opportunity and the value of diversity for all children and families. *(This statement is also supported by our Admissions Policy, SEND Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, Equalities Statement and is in line with the Equality Act 2010).*

We embrace the wider community, celebrating and benefiting from links with the Catholic church, parishes and families. In addition, we actively seek out other experiences for our children that expand their knowledge of people, places, activities, faiths and cultures that they may not ordinarily encounter, facilitating the acquisition of valuable cultural capital.

Key Drivers of Our Curriculum:

1. Building blocks for good behaviours for learning: It is our belief that all children should be enabled to excel and that strong achievement is the preserve of the many, not the few. Sequencing the building blocks for good behaviour for learning begins in the early years by teaching the '*Characteristics of Effective Learning*' and continues throughout the school, in all areas of the curriculum, to accommodate the differing needs and stage of development of our children. All are coached to:

- hold information in their mind and use it (**working memory**)
- master thoughts and impulses so as to resist temptations, distractions, and habits and to pause and think before acting (**controlling inhibitions**) and
- revise their plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information or mistakes (**cognitive flexibility**)

Children who are facing significant social, behavioural and emotional barriers to learning are supported effectively by the school's 'Ready to Learn' provision and the 'Learning Zone' offers children working considerably below their age related curriculum (ARE), access to a bespoke learning programme, delivered at an individual pace and highly resourced to ensure that small, steady steps of progress are achieved.

2. Fast Learning: We operate a 'Fast Learning' approach to support children's foundational learning, using strategies derived from Edison Learning's analysis of research and theory on learning, particularly Foundational Learning, and formulated to be part of manageable daily classroom routines. These strategies ensure all learners are provided with a strong basis for future learning by becoming fluent in fundamental knowledge and skills in maths, transcription and reading. Dedicating time to Foundational Learning gives learners the skills they need to tackle conceptual and collaborative learning successfully and helps establish a deep understanding.

3. Broad and balanced curriculum: Our curriculum is in line with the National Curriculum and underpinned by Age Related Expectations (ARE) of what children need to know by the end of each key stage. We have also designed the curriculum to address social disadvantage by addressing children's gaps in skills knowledge and experiences, since our school is situated in an area designated as amongst the most deprived 20% of all schools in the country. We believe children need to be fluent in skills of literacy and numeracy and that knowledge of

English and mathematics are an essential foundation for success in all subjects. In EYFS and KS1 we focus on ensuring children can read, write and use mathematical knowledge and skills well so that they can access a broad and balanced curriculum at KS2. However, as the vast majority of children enter the school at all ages, with very low baseline data, many with little or no English and high levels of deprivation there are still gaps in basic knowledge that persist into KS2. Therefore, the emphasis on the acquisition of reading, writing and maths skills continues to take up a large percentage of curriculum time. This will be reviewed annually as our children's gaps are addressed lower down in the school.

4. The Core Curriculum:

Maths: We use the Herts for Learning maths programme because of its 'spiral' approach to learning. It helps children to understand and remember mathematical concepts, knowledge and procedures appropriate for their starting point in learning and it is carefully sequenced to build mathematical skills and knowledge, systematically to mastery level. The planning supports the acquisition of new information, sequence by sequence and teachers annotate their plans to ensure that the delivery is broken into manageable steps meeting the needs of individual children. We also work with the Enigma Maths Hub to ensure that the school is teaching for mastery and addressing the following:

- Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract (CPA) approach to mathematics teaching
- Pupil discussion, including full stem sentences and speaking frames
- Whole class teaching approach
- Small steps in learning
- Children and staff using precise and accurate mathematical language
- Children applying knowledge in a variety of ways

The maths curriculum also develops mathematical fluency, reasoning and problem solving

Phonics – we believe that the key to children's success is their ability to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities. We ensure that we have well trained staff teaching phonics and the system for teaching reading, starting at the very beginning of EYFS, is well organised. Read, Write Inc, is taught with fidelity in EYFS and KS1 (and for any new arrivals who require phonics intervention). Any child at risk of not passing the phonics screening test receives 1:1 tutoring.

Reading – we aim to develop children's speaking and listening, vocabulary, language comprehension and a love of reading by developing a language rich curriculum. All children are exposed to a variety of stories, traditional tales, poems, rhymes, non-fiction and different authors. We have daily story time in EYFS and KS1 and it is also a regular feature in KS2.

The curriculum ensures children practice reading daily with books that are matched to their current phonics knowledge or reading level, backed up by reading daily at home. Guided reading is taught daily from Y2 onwards (when children have completed the R, W, Inc programme) to ensure children become fluent readers with good comprehension skills. It is our aim that by the end of KS1 all children are reading at ARE and effective support is given to those children who may need it e.g. Daily Readers.

Writing – the curriculum develops the children's ability to produce well structured, appropriately detailed writing in which the meaning is made clear and which engages the interest of the reader. Due attention is paid to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling. The school has developed detailed medium term plans for structuring lesson foci to provide guidance for teachers in understanding how their children will progress through NC 2014. Children are given frequent opportunities in school to write in different contexts using quality texts, visual media and real life experiences. Writing is developed across the curriculum by:

- considering a range of different audiences and purposes
- responding to stimuli such as written and visual texts across a range of media
- building upon visits or events

- using drama, role play, hot-seating
- producing writing on their own or as part of group

Lessons are sequenced to ensure children have the opportunity to plan, draft, write, evaluate and edit their writing to produce final pieces of work for a purpose. A combination of approaches to developing writing are used, including modelling, shared, guided and independent sessions.

Grammar - The school follows the Programme of Study for grammar as outlined in the main body of the National Curriculum as well as the grammar appendix (including terminology for pupils) and the glossary of NC 2014. Sometimes, an aspect of grammar is taught or revised in a discrete lesson session but more often it is embedded in other lessons to provide meaningful contexts for children in which they apply their learning in their writing.

Handwriting – The school aims to develop children's ability to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed. The school follows its own bespoke handwriting scheme following statutory and non-statutory guidance NC2104. The school's aim is that by the end of Y2 children will be joining their handwriting.

Spelling - The school follows the programme of study for spelling as outlined in the spelling appendix of NC 2014. In EYFS and KS1, phonics is taught discretely in class during daily 50min *Read Write Inc* lessons. As children progress, phonics and spelling is taught in discrete 20min daily sessions using the *Read Write Inc* Spelling programme, as well as embedded into English lessons and across the curriculum. Children are grouped according to their spelling ability to ensure gaps in knowledge are addressed, with the expectation that accelerated progress is made so children reach ARE. Children are supported to spell common exception words and given resources and strategies to support them embed their spelling and phonics knowledge. From Y2, children are taught to proof read their own work and self-correct.

Religious Education – Our curriculum has Christ at the centre of everything we do. We follow the 'Come and See' programme of study for RE, which is in line with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Each pupil's knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith is nurtured through a spiralled curriculum and includes the study of Church tradition, scripture exploration, the Church throughout the world, meditation and prayer. The Islamic and Jewish faiths are also studied, giving pupils a sense of tolerance of differences in belief in the wider community. The PSHE programme and assemblies use a range of visitors who explain their roles and beliefs to expand pupils' experience of a world view.

Children are also taught Relationship and Sex Education through a curriculum which is in line with the teachings of the Catholic church and nationally recognised expectations. The emphasis of this curriculum is to recognise and develop healthy, loving relationships.

The prayer life of our school enables pupils to experience a relationship with Christ at a personal level and happens through individual prayer, collective worship, Mass and other liturgies. Pupils are encouraged to organise, design and lead these activities.

Our charitable work involves helping others in a variety of ways at local, national and international levels. This fosters empathy in the pupils as well as nurturing a sense of justice and morality.

5. The Foundation Curriculum – Science, History, Geography, MFL, Art & Design, Design & Technology, Computing, PE, Music, RHE

The foundation curriculum is planned and sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been learned before and builds towards clearly identified end points. It also reflects the schools local context and the cultural capital our children will need to succeed in life. In order to achieve a consistent approach and to support our teachers with strong subject knowledge we have developed detailed medium term plans for all curriculum subjects. These plans are designed so that children can embed key concepts into their long term memory and apply them fluently, making links between previous learning and from subject to subject.