

Vernon Primary School



Curriculum Statement (Policy)



Vernon Primary School has an excellent reputation for its curriculum. Noted for its richness and breadth, it teaches pupils the highest level of skills, knowledge and understanding that they will need to prepare them for the world, within an inspiring, innovative and holistic curriculum.

We have a vibrant curriculum that is well sequenced and coherent. We cover all National Curriculum requirements within a framework that we have designed to reflect the context of our school. The teaching of our curriculum is ambitious and has sufficient depth. Our cross-curricular approach allows for transferable concepts that help children to know more, remember more and for them to make clear links with their knowledge. We ensure that children can see the connection between subjects within a relevant and exciting context. This approach provides opportunities for real, hands-on experiences to excite and engage. Furthermore, it allows us to continue to place emphasis on creativity and immersive learning experiences.

Exciting, innovative lessons lead to clearly defined end points, whether that is the end of a lesson, series of lessons or the end of the academic year. Lessons are rich in vocabulary in order to ensure that every child in our school has the opportunity for academic success and to ensure that high standards are maintained. Our school environment is conducive to learning.

Our curriculum is taught through a dynamic, structured approach which appeals to children and excites their interests. Each year group teaches through a termly theme, which acts as a stimulus for learning. Our curriculum maps for each year group can be found on this page. Details of each curriculum area's intent, long term map, learning objectives and milestones can be found within each subject's dedicated website page (see drop down menu under 'Curriculum').

Values

Underpinning our 'curriculum design' are our key values. These shape our curriculum, bring about the aims and values of our school and respond to the needs of the school community. Our key curriculum values for our school are:

Creativity and Curiosity:

Our children will have a thirst for learning, both in school and beyond our gates. They will be creative and curious learners, well-educated citizens and they will gain the knowledge, skills, understanding and vocabulary to empower them to contribute positively to society.

Independence:

Our children will be independent thinkers and learners. They will take ownership of their learning and strive to do their best, reflecting on their learning and developing the ability to think for themselves, solve problems and work with others to find solutions.

Respect and Cooperation:

Our children will have self-respect, as well as respect for others and for the environment. They will cooperate with others, working as a team and showing empathy, tolerance and compassion for others. Above all they will have the integrity to make a positive contribution to the world around them. Our children will have healthy minds, showing they are emotionally happy, resilient, respectful learners and they will stay true to themselves, valuing their own identity.

These values thread through our planning, teaching and learning across the whole school, ensuring that our ethos is consistent and progressive from Reception to Year 6. They permeate our curriculum, alongside the British Values of Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance, Democracy and the Rule of Law, preparing our pupils for modern Britain and for life beyond Vernon. Our children will journey through Vernon as curious, creative and independent citizens, with their passion for learning ignited and with their self-belief, respect for others, independence and wellbeing nurtured. Every child will have the chance to shine and will leave the school prepared for a future of possibilities.

'Nobody Else is Quite Like Me'

Our curriculum at Vernon is designed to allow each one of our learners to:

- Achieve the best possible academic standards, whatever their ability
- Develop skills and personal qualities for lifelong learning, preparing children to make an active contribution to society
- Explore real world experiences, so that children can see the relevance their learning has in the real world
- Become mentally and emotionally happy and resilient citizens, ready for the challenges of the 21st Century.

We have designed our curriculum with the following in mind:

- How children learn and remember – we recognise that progress means knowing more and remembering more and so we strive for our children to know more and remember more as a result of their time with us at Vernon.
- What our children need to succeed in life – we aim for our learners to have the ‘cultural capital’ they need to make aspirational choices and experience success beyond their time at Vernon Primary School.

Our curriculum at Vernon, underpinned by current research, has been designed to take account of the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and the Primary National Curriculum. (These have been used as the basis for the content and the expectations of our own curriculum). Our curriculum does also incorporate other experiences and opportunities which best meet the needs of the children in our school.

The full range of core and foundation subjects have been carefully mapped out across school in clear progression maps, so that knowledge, understanding, skills and concepts build over time. As a result of this, we hope that all children leave Vernon having mastered a wide range of concepts and skills and gained the knowledge that gives them a love of learning, prepares them for their next steps and develop an understanding of the world in which they live.

As part of our carefully mapped out curriculum, we also ensure we provide all children with opportunities for experiential learning, through residential visits, extra-curricular sports, arts, music clubs, and exciting enrichment opportunities for every year group.

Curriculum Implementation:

Our curriculum at Vernon is built around 8 core features.

1. We have adopted a thematic approach to our curriculum and throughout the academic year, each year group designs learning around three key themes. These have been designed to be exciting and engaging for children at Vernon. The themes are often cross-curricular and subjects are taught as part of the termly theme, although discrete lessons or units are taught when appropriate, to prevent the creation of tenuous links. Computing is taught following the ‘National Centre for Computing’; Geography is taught until the ‘Kapow’ programme of study; RE is taught following the local SACRE guidelines; PE uses Primary PE Passport as its basis for curriculum mapping; and PSHE follows the PSHE Association thematic model, incorporating the ‘My Happy Mind’ materials for mental health and wellbeing.
2. To engage, immerse and ‘hook’ the children in their learning experiences, every classroom learning environment reflects the theme that the children are learning about. This brings the learning to life and

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is not only used as a tool for engagement, but also to support and deepen the learning experiences taking place in the classroom.

3. Through the termly theme, all children engage in memorable experiences to enhance their learning, and further develop their knowledge and understanding. This could be for example, a visit to a significant place, a visitor into school or a practical activity or experience led by school staff.
4. PSHE lies at the heart of the curriculum we deliver, to closely meet the needs of our children. As a school, we have adopted the PSHE Association's thematic model, which ensures that the whole school is focusing on the same area at the same time. This enables us to deliver assemblies which focus on a key area, such as resilience, as well as to weave these key concepts throughout the school day and week. We have also incorporated the 'My Happy Mind' materials, an approach which supports and develops children's mental health and wellbeing and threads throughout the school.
5. We adopt a child-centred approach at Vernon, ensuring that our curriculum is accessible to all and that we are inclusive in our practice. Children of all abilities and backgrounds are supported to achieve their full potential and teaching staff adapt their planning and teaching to ensure that every child strives for their full potential in line with our school motto that 'Nobody else is quite like me'.
6. Quality texts are integral to our curriculum approach, as we recognise that fluency in reading enables children to have access to the full curriculum entitlement. We believe it is our role to ensure children leave us being able to articulate themselves clearly, reading and writing confidently and effectively. These quality texts are chosen carefully by teaching staff and thread through our daily life at Vernon, not only through our English curriculum, but in the guided reading texts that are studied, our 'reading streams', individual reading books and inspirational 'book nooks'.
7. We endeavour to ensure that children see a relevance and a purpose to their learning, so plan for learning to build towards a purposeful outcome at the end of each unit. These are showcased in each child's individual 'study book', which draws together a collection of cross-curricular work demonstrating what the children have learnt. It provides the children, teachers and parents or carers with a snapshot of learning throughout the theme and enables teachers to evaluate a range of learning, as well as for children to develop a pride in their work.
8. Central to all of the above, and to our curriculum design, is an expectation of innovative quality first teaching and learning, delivered by all. Teaching staff use our curriculum maps and planning formats to ensure that learning is sequenced so that children build knowledge and skills over time – both building skills and knowledge within the year group curriculum, but also building on, and making connections with, prior knowledge from other years in school. Staff are clear about the 'sticky knowledge' that the children will learn during the course of the theme and then ensure there are plenty of opportunities for the children to practice and apply this knowledge in a range of different contexts, so that they achieve deep, long term learning.

Continuing Professional Development for all staff is a priority to ensure they have the skills and knowledge necessary to deliver the highest standards across the entire curriculum. Subject leaders have the necessary expertise to play a pivotal role in both the design and delivery of their subject area, ensuring a clear progression of both skills and knowledge across all year groups, underpinned by a robust assessment system. They can confidently articulate how learning is revisited and developed year on year, to ensure a real depth of learning across the school.

At Vernon, we have high expectations for the quality of teaching across school. We ensure that continued improvement is the focus of our monitoring schedule by focusing on how staff can share good practice

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between each other, identify areas for improvement and seek high quality CPD, both internally led by outstanding practitioners and through external sources, can be provided to support their improvement.

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Early Years is the foundation on which children build the rest of their educational journey. Our aim is to provide a broad, balanced and relevant range of experiences, well rooted in play and planned to be worthwhile and of interest and value to our children. These experiences will be developed in a safe, secure and supportive environment. Children will be able to fully develop socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually and spiritually as they work towards achieving the early learning goals.

We work from the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, with four overarching principles: Learning and Development, The Unique Child, Positive Relationships and Enabling Environments. There are seven areas of learning and development. The three Prime areas are: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, Communication and Language. There are a further four specific areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design. In planning and guiding children's activities, our staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are: playing and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically.

The Impact of our Curriculum:

As a result of our well-planned and implemented curriculum, we would expect the impact to be that:

- Our children show creativity, curiosity, independence, respect and cooperation.
- Our children demonstrate a passion and thirst for learning
- Our children achieve well – all making good progress from their starting points and achieving at least the expected standard across the entire curriculum by the end of Key Stage 2. They will have the knowledge, skills, understanding and vocabulary that empowers them as citizens in the 21st Century
- Our children have access to a wide and varied curriculum, enabling each of them to excel as individuals and be the best they can be
- Our children have high aspirations for the future and know that these can be realised with hard work and determination
- Our children are mentally and emotionally happy and resilient learners
- Our families work in partnership with us to ensure their child's journey at Vernon is a positive one and prepares them to contribute positively to the world in which they live