



An Overview: Fir Tree Primary School

Curriculum and Assessment

At Fir Tree Primary School, we aim to provide a rich, ambitious and engaging curriculum that inspires children to explore, investigate, question and make sense of the world around them. Our curriculum is designed to develop both the knowledge and skills children need to succeed, whilst nurturing their natural curiosity and encouraging them to become thoughtful, confident and independent learners.

We believe that children learn best when they are given opportunities to build secure knowledge over time, make connections between different areas of learning and apply what they have learned in meaningful contexts. Our curriculum therefore combines carefully sequenced subject knowledge with opportunities for children to investigate, discuss, practise, create, problem-solve and reflect.

At the heart of our curriculum are English and mathematics, providing children with the essential foundations for learning across the school. Alongside these, our science, humanities, arts, computing, physical education, languages, religious education and wider curriculum provide a broad range of experiences and opportunities. Each subject has its own identity, knowledge and progression, whilst meaningful links are made between subjects where these enhance children's understanding.

Our curriculum is underpinned by the values of **respect, kindness, aspiration, resilience, fairness** and **curiosity**. We want children to develop the confidence to challenge themselves, persevere when learning is difficult, work effectively with others and increasingly take responsibility for their own learning.

English

English is central to our curriculum. We aim to develop children who are confident communicators, fluent readers and purposeful writers who can use language effectively across a wide range of contexts.

Reading

In the early years and Key Stage 1, children develop their reading through a systematic and consistent phonics programme using Read Write Inc. This provides children with the knowledge and skills needed to decode words accurately and develop increasing fluency and comprehension.

As children move into Key Stage 2, they develop their reading through whole-class reading. Children encounter a wide range of high-quality fiction, non-fiction and poetry, including challenging and engaging texts. Reading lessons develop vocabulary, retrieval, inference, interpretation, understanding of themes and authorial choices, and the ability to use evidence to support ideas.

Reading is also an important part of the wider curriculum. Children encounter texts which broaden their knowledge of the world and support learning across subjects. Regular opportunities to hear high-quality texts read aloud, alongside opportunities for children to read independently and widely, help develop a lifelong love of reading.

Writing

Writing at Fir Tree is developed through a wide range of purposeful and engaging units. Children write for different audiences and purposes and encounter a variety of text types throughout their time at school.

High-quality texts, projects and experiences are used as stimuli for writing. Where appropriate, writing is connected to other areas of the curriculum, allowing children to apply their knowledge in meaningful ways. For example, children may use their scientific learning to write an explanation or their humanities learning to produce a non-chronological report.

Across Key Stage 2, each year group also studies a Shakespeare story, providing a continuing thread through the curriculum and introducing children to some of Britain's most important literary heritage.

Text types are deliberately revisited and developed as children move through the school. Children are expected to build on previous learning, developing increasing control over vocabulary, sentence construction, organisation, grammar, punctuation and style.

Each term, children complete an independent assessed write which provides teachers with an opportunity to assess how effectively children can apply their knowledge and understanding independently.

Mathematics

Our mathematics curriculum develops confident and resilient mathematicians who can use mathematics fluently, reason mathematically and solve problems in a range of contexts.

In Reception, Mastering Number supports the development of strong foundations in number sense, whilst White Rose Maths is used to support the sequence and timing of wider mathematical learning. Across Key Stages 1 and 2, White Rose Maths supports the organisation and progression of mathematical content.

Children develop mathematical understanding through a combination of concrete, pictorial and abstract representations. Lessons provide opportunities to develop fluency, reasoning and problem-solving, with children encouraged to explain their thinking, make connections and identify efficient strategies. Mathematical vocabulary and precise mathematical language are explicitly developed throughout the school. As children progress, they are expected to apply their knowledge to increasingly complex and unfamiliar problems.

Science

Science at Fir Tree develops children's understanding of the natural and physical world whilst encouraging curiosity, questioning and a willingness to investigate. Children build a progressive body of scientific knowledge across Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Alongside this knowledge, they develop their ability to work scientifically through observation, questioning, prediction, investigation, measurement, recording, interpretation and evaluation.

Practical experiences and investigations are an important part of science. Children are encouraged to make predictions, observe carefully, collect evidence, discuss their findings and use scientific vocabulary accurately. Practical work is used purposefully to deepen understanding rather than simply as an activity.

Science may be taught discretely or linked meaningfully to other areas of the curriculum where this strengthens children's understanding. Children are encouraged to recognise the relevance of science in the world around them and to make connections between scientific ideas and real-life situations.

In Lower Key Stage 2, floor books are used to record aspects of children's scientific learning. As children progress through the school, they increasingly take responsibility for recording and communicating their scientific thinking independently.

Humanities

History and Geography provide children with opportunities to understand the world, its people and how places and societies have changed over time. Our humanities curriculum provides a balance of History and Geography across the school, with carefully sequenced learning that develops knowledge, vocabulary and disciplinary skills.

In History, children develop a secure understanding of chronology and change. They explore local, British and global history and consider concepts such as cause and consequence, change and continuity, significance and historical evidence. Local history is an important feature of the curriculum, with children making connections to the history of Wallingford and the surrounding area.

Geography develops children's understanding of places, people and environments. Children develop locational and place knowledge alongside an understanding of physical and human geography. They use maps, geographical vocabulary, fieldwork and data to investigate the world at different scales.

Across both subjects, children are encouraged to ask questions, interpret evidence, make comparisons and develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the world around them.

Art and Design & Technology

Art and Design provides children with opportunities to develop their creativity, confidence and ability to communicate ideas visually. We use the AccessArt Split Primary Art Curriculum to support progression in drawing and sketchbooks, surface and colour, and working in three dimensions. Children are encouraged to experiment with materials and techniques, develop their own ideas and evaluate and refine their work. Drawing is an important part of the curriculum and is used both as a subject-specific skill and as a way of recording and developing ideas.

Design & Technology provides opportunities for children to design, make and evaluate purposeful products. We use Kapow to support planning and progression across areas including cooking and nutrition, structures, mechanisms, textiles, electrical systems and the digital world. Children develop practical skills alongside their ability to design, solve problems, evaluate products and make improvements. Cooking and nutrition form an important part of the curriculum, enabling children to understand food, healthy choices and practical preparation.

Music

Music is a crucial part of life at Fir Tree. Our curriculum develops children's ability to perform, listen, compose and respond to music whilst building a growing understanding of musical vocabulary and the inter-related dimensions of music.

We use Kapow to support the progression of musical knowledge and skills. Alongside this, children regularly explore and appreciate a broad range of music through listening and discussion. Across the school, children encounter music from different periods, cultures and traditions, helping them develop a broad understanding of musical heritage and the diversity of musical expression.

Singing is a particular strength of our provision, with children singing regularly with the support of a professional singing coach. Children are encouraged to perform with confidence and to develop an appreciation of music both as performers and listeners.

Computing

Computing is an important part of our curriculum, preparing children to use technology confidently, creatively, safely and responsibly. We use the Teach Computing curriculum to support progression from Year 1 to Year 6. Children develop knowledge and skills across computer science, information technology and digital literacy, including programming, computing systems and networks, creating media, and data and information.

Computing lessons combine conceptual understanding with practical experience. Children have opportunities to create projects, work collaboratively, solve problems, debug, explore and evaluate. Programming is developed progressively, with children learning to read, understand, modify and create code.

Online safety and responsible use of technology are embedded throughout the curriculum. Children learn how technology works, how it can be used effectively and how to make safe and responsible choices when working online.

Physical Education

Physical Education is an important part of our curriculum and supports children's physical, social and emotional development. Across the school, children develop fundamental movement skills, coordination, balance, agility and physical competence before applying these skills in increasingly complex activities and games. Children also develop their understanding of teamwork, tactics, communication, leadership and fair play.

We use The PE Hub as our scheme of learning to support progression and planning. The curriculum provides children with a broad range of physical experiences, including games, dance, gymnastics, athletics, outdoor and adventurous activities and swimming. Swimming and water safety form an important part of our provision, with children developing water confidence, swimming technique and an understanding of how to stay safe in and around water.

Children are also encouraged to participate in competition, clubs and wider sporting opportunities, developing resilience, determination, teamwork and respect for others.

Religious Education

Religious Education enables children to explore a range of religious and non-religious worldviews and develop their understanding of how beliefs and values influence people's lives. We use Jigsaw RE, alongside the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, to support our curriculum. Children encounter Christianity throughout Years 1 to 6, alongside a range of other worldviews including Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism and Humanism.

The curriculum focuses on depth rather than breadth. Children explore beliefs and teachings, stories and texts, celebrations, places of worship, practices and traditions, values and moral questions. They are encouraged to ask questions, consider different perspectives and reflect on their own ideas. Our aim is not to promote one worldview over another, but to help children develop knowledge, understanding, empathy and respect for the diverse beliefs and perspectives they will encounter in the wider world.

French

French is taught weekly from Year 1 to Year 6. We use Language Angels to support the development and progression of children's language learning. Children develop their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills alongside an understanding of vocabulary, phonics, grammar and sentence construction. Regular opportunities to speak and listen in French help children develop confidence and accuracy in using the language.

Language learning also provides opportunities to explore different cultures and perspectives. Children develop their oracy, creativity and independence whilst learning strategies that help them persevere and communicate effectively when using another language.

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education

PSHE supports children's personal development, emotional wellbeing, relationships, health and understanding of their responsibilities as members of different communities. We use Jigsaw to structure our PSHE curriculum, with one of its six Puzzles explored each term: Being Me in My World, Celebrating Difference, Dreams and Goals, Healthy Me, Relationships and Changing Me.

Children are provided with opportunities to discuss important issues, develop strategies for managing themselves and their relationships, understand healthy choices and consider their aspirations and responsibilities. PSHE also provides a safe environment in which children can listen to others, express their opinions, ask questions and develop the confidence to participate respectfully in discussion.

Curriculum in the Community

Our curriculum reflects the school's place within the community of Wallingford and the wider world. Where appropriate, children have opportunities to learn from local organisations, businesses, professionals and community members.

Visits and visitors are used purposefully to enhance children's understanding and provide experiences which bring learning to life. Local places and events are also used to help children understand their own community and its history. Children are encouraged to understand their role as members of the school, local and global community and to recognise how they can make a positive contribution.

Environmental Learning

Developing environmental awareness is an important part of our wider curriculum. Children learn about the world around them and consider how their actions can affect the environment.

Environmental learning is supported through science, geography and wider school initiatives. Children are encouraged to think about sustainability, energy use, biodiversity and responsible choices, developing an understanding that they have a role to play in caring for the world around them.

Personal Development

Our curriculum contributes to children's wider personal development by providing opportunities to develop confidence, independence, resilience, responsibility and respect. Children are encouraged to work collaboratively whilst also developing the ability to work independently. They are taught to persevere when faced with challenge, reflect on their learning and recognise that mistakes and difficulties are an important part of learning. Through the curriculum and wider school life, children encounter opportunities to develop their interests, recognise their strengths and understand the importance of contributing positively to the lives of others.

Young Leaders

Children are given opportunities to take on responsibilities and develop their leadership skills throughout their time at Fir Tree. Roles and responsibilities enable children to contribute to school life, represent the views of their peers, support others and develop confidence in leading and organising activities. As children move through the school, opportunities for leadership increase, allowing pupils to develop responsibility, communication, organisation, teamwork and decision-making skills.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning at Fir Tree. Its purpose is to help teachers understand what children know and can do, identify misconceptions and gaps in learning, and decide what children need to learn next. Teachers use ongoing formative assessment throughout lessons and units. This includes questioning, discussion, observation, retrieval activities, children's work, practical application and independent tasks. Assessment information is used responsively to adapt teaching and provide appropriate support or challenge. Children are encouraged to understand what they are learning and what successful learning looks like. Feedback is provided through a range of approaches, with verbal feedback and responsive teaching playing an important

role. Children are encouraged to reflect on their learning, identify areas for improvement and take increasing responsibility for their progress.

Assessment is used to support progression rather than simply to record attainment. Teachers consider whether children have secured the knowledge and skills taught and whether they can apply them independently and in different contexts.

In English and mathematics, regular assessment opportunities help teachers identify areas requiring further teaching and support. In other curriculum subjects, assessment is closely linked to the knowledge and skills identified within each subject's curriculum. Moderation is used where appropriate to support consistency and confidence in teacher assessment. Teachers work collaboratively to discuss children's learning and ensure that expectations remain high across the school.

Our Curriculum in Action

At Fir Tree Primary School, we believe that a successful curriculum should provide every child with the opportunity to learn, achieve, discover their interests and develop the confidence to take on new challenges. Our curriculum is ambitious whilst recognising that children learn in different ways and at different rates. It provides strong foundations in English and mathematics alongside rich experiences across the wider curriculum. Through carefully sequenced subject learning, meaningful experiences, opportunities for independence and a strong sense of community, we aim to prepare our children not only for the next stage of their education but for life beyond primary school.

Our school motto, "Learning and Growing Together," reflects our belief that everyone is a learner. We want our children to leave Fir Tree as knowledgeable, curious, resilient and respectful young people who are ready to continue learning, contribute positively to their communities and embrace the opportunities ahead of them.