



The Curriculum and Assessment at Fir Tree

The curriculum we provide for our children is enriched with opportunities to explore, investigate and question; delivered through stimulating and meaningful learning opportunities. To develop their knowledge and understanding, we aim to extend children's natural curiosity and encourage them to be critical thinkers, take responsibility for their learning, work with others and to work independently.

In order to ensure children develop and secure the skills and knowledge for life- long learning, a strong foundation in Mathematics and English can be found at the heart of our curriculum with the sciences, humanities and the arts threaded through it. Built around these, is the wider curriculum, which offers stimulating, varied and challenging opportunities that encourage a thirst for learning.

The curriculum is taught through both discrete subjects and projects, allowing for a cross curricular approach to learning. Our whole school projects titled 'The Take One's' allows children to gain a deeper understanding of art, music and literature; Take One Picture, Take One Piece and Take One Tale, where each class explores a famous painting from the national gallery, a piece of classical music and a renowned traditional or classical story across the year. In addition to this each class also explores and learns a Shakespearean play. By the end of four years a child would have learnt about, four famous paintings, four pieces of classical music and four traditional or classical stories. Alongside these projects the curriculum covers science, history and geography projects each with their own theme and focus. The national curriculum learning objectives are at the core of all the projects.

Our curriculum is further enriched by capturing current events that play an important part in our lives. Equally we ensure embedding a global dimension into our curriculum, which encourages children to learn and extend their knowledge and understanding of international communities and gain an understanding of their place in the world as global citizens.

Enhancing the curriculum, through the course of each school year, are regular visits to both local and national places of interest and from professionals and experts, who are invited into school to share their skills and knowledge with the children.

Our aim is to provide the children with the skills and knowledge to prepare them for the next phase of their education. Developing the skills of working in a team, to work independently, take responsibility, challenge themselves and to be resilient and persevere. This leads to gaining an understanding of and developing a growth mindset. We use Gardiner's multiple intelligences; to encourage and empower children to recognise their own strengths and to challenge themselves in getting better in any of the smarts, which are self, people, word, number, body, practical, nature, music and picture smart.

The curriculum we provide is underpinned by the core values of respect, friendship, tolerance, courage, perseverance and responsibility.

Science

Our cross-curricular approach to learning and teaching enables children to undertake their science learning in a meaningful context. The knowledge based learning is taught through practical experiences, which develop the skills based learning. We aim to build on children's enthusiasm and natural sense of wonder about the world whilst learning about the living and non-living environment with respect and sensitivity. Children are encouraged to be inquisitive and to question the world around them. Science is either taught discreetly or through a project and where relevant it is linked with both maths and computing in order to enhance the

learning. Children develop their knowledge and skills of observation, prediction, investigation, communication, questioning and hypothesising through practical work and investigations where the correct use of scientific vocabulary is taught. They are encouraged to explore science in ways which are relevant and meaningful to them. We recognise the significance of learning through real-life situations where children can experience the scientific phenomena that they are learning about.

Computing

Computing is an integral part of our curriculum. Children learn computing skills, programming and e-safety. Within each project or where subjects are taught discreetly, children have the opportunity to gather information from the internet using safe websites; use word processing to write reports and use software programmes for maths and science. Algorithms are also a key element of computer science and require levels of problem solving. Children are taught coding for programming and making videos including animation, linked to their projects including collating information into power points.

Our aim is to prepare children to gain the skills they will need to use the technologies that are available in today's world and to understand how to use them safely and responsibly.

The Arts

We are very proud of our vibrant performing arts curriculum. The four art themes are included within and across the curriculum; art craft and design, dance, drama and music. We believe that teaching the Arts is about preparing young minds for a future of invaluable experiences. The Arts nurture inventiveness and in turn raises a child's self-esteem, self-discipline and self-motivation. We have arts ambassadors from each class, who promote the arts and are in essence the voice of the children. Music and singing features high in our provision; the children have the opportunity to be part of the orchestra and choir and learn to play instruments either through First Access or Play On provided by the County Music Service or through our own teaching. We work closely with the Oxfordshire Music Service and our choir takes part in the annual Big Sing at Christmas time. Each year, the children are part of a school production with teams of actors, singers, dancers, set and costume designers, program and ticket designers and technicians. We regularly bring performing arts to our local community with events such as The Summer Concert and our annual Christmas Carol Concert, which includes the children singing a selection of traditional songs and carols plus performances from our musicians, the orchestra and choir. The children also perform to church groups and to the retired people and take part in the partnership's annual dance festival. As well as performing, children have the opportunity to appreciate the arts with visits to galleries, museums, the theatre and visits from professional artists.

Physical Education and Sport

Sporting provision at Fir Tree ensures that our children have the chance to participate and excel in a wide range of sports delivered by both teaching staff and professional coaches. Each year every child has the opportunity to learn gymnastics, dance, netball, rugby, football, rounders, tennis, athletics and swimming. Our year 5 and 6 children have weekly swimming lessons for three terms. We work closely with Wallingford School to take part in a range of sporting activities provided by their sports leaders. Every child has the opportunity to take part in competitive sport events. We regularly compete against other schools in a wide range of activities and sports. In addition, we have a number of opportunities for children to continue their sporting education outside of school hours with our range of clubs such as netball, rugby, football and multi-sports.

Religious Education

In their time at Fir Tree, children learn about different religions, traditions and beliefs and the importance of respect and tolerance. We follow the Oxford Diocese Board of Education scheme of work and the Oxfordshire agreed syllabus; agreed by the local SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education).

Personal, Social, Health Education including Relationships and Sex Education

We ensure that every child is guaranteed a PSHE education that covers mental health and wellbeing, physical health, including healthy lifestyles and first aid; learning about safe, healthy relationships, including understanding consent and negotiating life online.

In addition to this PSHE prepares children for the next phase of their education, where the foundations of their future are laid by giving them an opportunity to understand their future aspirations and the skills needed for their future prospects.

Curriculum in the Community

Fir Tree plays a key role in the life of our local community. We take every opportunity to work with local businesses, charities and experts resulting in some unique and exciting learning opportunities. We regularly take part in a range of competitions, the Wallingford Pancake Race and the Wallingford Horticultural Show. As well as visiting local businesses and organisations, we invite members of our community into school. The year 6 children visit a local hospital to learn life saving skills and we welcome members of the local fire brigade, Stemnet ambassadors and the NSPCC, who help us learn and understand how to keep safe. We enjoy celebrations with the local churches including visits from the Vicar. Each Christmas, we share a carol concert with the local community, sing carols at Westgate House and help Santa on his sleigh journey through Wallingford. We also organise and take part in events such as fundraising for local, national and global charities, many of which are decided upon and organised by the children. We forge links with local businesses and professionals who share their knowledge and expertise where relevant in our projects.

Environmental Learning

Developing a sense of social consciousness also forms an important part of our curriculum. We want all our children to become more aware of the impact they have on their environment and how they can protect it for generations to come. The children regularly work in our school garden and learn about healthy eating; a significant percentage of our produce is used in our school kitchen for lunches. Children regularly take part in activities to explore and protect our forest area. Through the school council, children decide upon and help implement the ways in which we can improve our school. Through the local carbon hub we have been given solar panels and through this the children are learning about energy and the part we as citizens can play in saving energy and looking after the environment.

Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Development

The children in our care are the citizens of tomorrow. We strongly believe that values make the person you are and we provide through our curriculum values based education. The children learn about the values of respect, friendship, tolerance, courage, perseverance and responsibility and that values make the person you are. The children learn about helping others whether it is through raising funds for charities or taking part in community events and understand what it means to be an ambassador for their school. Through the celebration of festivals and our religious education provision they learn about respecting others and their beliefs. Our international work and global learning programme gives them an understanding of global awareness and citizenship and their place in the wider world.

We are proud of the education we provide to our children. Everyone is a learner and learning from each other is valued.

Young Leaders

An important addition to our curriculum is to encourage children to take on different roles and responsibilities as young leaders. The children learn about the democratic process through the elections for the school council, an arts ambassador or a values rep to represent their class and be the voice of their class. In addition to these roles, children are also elected to be class librarian. Our year 6 children are given further opportunities to be elected to becoming digital and sports leaders or being part of the team of school librarians or a member of the radio team. These opportunities allow children to gain different skills, knowledge and understanding to take on leadership roles in the future

Assessment

The curriculum is underpinned with ongoing assessment, which goes hand in hand with our learning and teaching. It is an essential prerequisite for effective teaching that meets the needs of our children and is embedded in the learning environment.

Assessment helps the children engage more fully in their own development and learning. They are able to respond to the challenges if they can see what they need to do to make progress and why. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and together with the teacher's guidance and support they will know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve further. Teachers give children feedback and this is a combination of both verbal and written. They are also encouraged to self assess against the success criteria that is built up as part of the lesson.

Teachers engage children in learning conversations. These may take place on a one to one; in pairs or in small groups as part of guided group work. These sessions help children to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do next in their learning.

To understand the criteria used for assessment and next steps in reading, writing, maths and science, the children have 'next steps of learning' in their books. They also have the opportunity to set their own next steps. Assessment is a two way process and we strongly believe it can only be successful when the child is involved in the process.

Parents are able to support their child's learning when they know what they need to make progress. Parent meetings take place twice a year where there is an opportunity to see their child's work and to discuss their child's progress and next development points. We believe that assessment includes externality and objectivity so to secure the process, moderation takes place across the year both in school and across the Wallingford partnership of schools. This helps to validate and secure the judgements made by the teacher.

To summarise the curriculum we provide to our children; there is something for everyone to grow and excel in. Our school motto 'Learning and Growing together' epitomises our belief that everyone is a learner and we learn together. Children are given a range of opportunities to find their strengths and interests; be it academically, socially, through the arts or sports.