

# Curriculum Policy

***“All DEMAT children are entitled to a rich, highly specified curriculum where knowledge is valued, well-sequenced and taught to be remembered. It is not left to chance.”***

## October 2025

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### A. INTENT

#### **Our Core Curriculum Principles**

- **Ambitious and specified.** It sets children up to lead fulfilled lives and does not limit them due to our interests or knowledge.
- **Coherently planned and sequenced.** Units and themes are not taught in isolation and we build from EYFS. We consider our curriculum as a whole. Teachers know what pupils have learnt and will learn because coverage is revisited, rather than repeated, in a thoughtful way.
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- **Rooted in our Local context.** We plan for gaps and the needs of our children in our school.

Our curriculum Policy is evidence-informed and we believe that **knowledge is empowering**, providing a foundation for achieving success and reaching deep understanding. The more children know, the more they can learn.

“The act of ‘practising remembering’ is at the very core of what effective learning is about. The more we know, the more we can know. The more we know, the more we can understand. The more often we retrieve knowledge from our vast complex stores of memories in different ways, the stronger those memories become and the more fluently we can recall them. The more fluent we are in recalling our knowledge, the better placed we are to explore new knowledge, to solve new problems, to engage in debate, to respond to challenges, to understand what we read. The more we know, the more creative we can be”

– Tom Sherrington, Foreword to *Retrieval Practice* (Kate Jones, 2019)

“There are no significant shortcuts to intellectual competence. Domain-specific knowledge and long practice are essential to consolidating a skill in long-term memory. Neither computers nor general critical-thinking techniques can circumvent those arduous requirements.”

— E.D. Hirsch, *Why Knowledge Matters: Rescuing Our Children from Failed Educational Theories* (2016)

### **Our Curriculum choices**

Teachers, Subject Leaders and Senior Leaders have all made choices in carefully planning our curriculum. At Stanground St John’s we have developed a progression curriculum model where knowledge is specified, well-sequenced and taught to be remembered. From Early Years to Year 6, knowledge builds on knowledge. Our headteacher and senior leaders are involved in the curriculum choices that have been made and challenge and scrutinize those choices made by subject leaders. We value the unique identity of each academic discipline. Through our curriculum, children build both the substantive knowledge and concepts central to a subject, as well as the disciplinary knowledge, (how scholars arrive at this knowledge).

### **Progression**

- Knowledge and skills progress and build across year groups and across the school. Our curriculum starts in EYFS. Foundational knowledge is planned in Reception and is built on in later learning through Key Stages 1 & 2. There is a clear, sequential order of specified knowledge. Our long-term plan shows the structure of learning, where it will be taught and in which year group and how it has been sequenced to remember from Reception to Year 6.
- We use vertical planning. New knowledge builds on secure foundations at every point as pupils move through our curriculum. Planning is also horizontal; links between areas of concurrent learning are deliberately made.

### **Relevancy to our pupils**

- Given our context, we encounter gaps in vocabulary, communication and language, gross and fine motor skills and Understanding the World. Experiences outside school are limited.
- Our curriculum within school takes note of this and ensures we plan for our pupils from the moment they start school.
- Our Reception teacher quickly and systematically assesses the specific starting points of our pupils on entry to Reception and uses responsive teaching to meet the needs of all learners.
- We plan greater opportunities in EYFS for wider experiences, explicit vocabulary teaching and personal and emotional skills (e.g. School buddies).
- Our pupils lack outdoor experiences; therefore, we provide opportunities for Forest Schools and Outdoor learning for all Reception and Year 1 pupils; as well as invest in an educational group membership of the National Trust which gives us free access to high quality outdoor spaces.
- We make our curriculum relevant to our pupils in our location by studying our locality e.g. Year 6 environment, Year 5 local study, Year 1 local area. We learn about significant individuals for specific reasons, linked to our curriculum.
- We carefully consider which visits or visitors take place and ensure they are ambitious, connected to our curriculum and extend our pupils' world view. e.g. Houses of Parliament as part of our Year 4 Rule of Law unit; Visits from the Muslim Foundation; and Weekly visits from our Christian church leaders – all planned to widen our pupils' British Values.
- We plan these visits carefully, with thought and links to a unit of work pupils are studying, have studied or will study in the future.
- We offer opportunities for a wide range of free extra-curricular activities including sport, music, maths, and reading.

### **CPD (Continuous Professional Development)**

- Staff training is prioritised to ensure all staff (including support staff) involved in educating children grow together in building robust, collective practice that is coherent for children and allows staff to develop.
- In order to deliver lessons with clarity and knowledge, teachers are offered regular CPD and access to high quality resources which improve teacher subject knowledge. We also encourage all staff to engage with professional educational reading.

- CPD is evidence-informed, carefully planned, linked to our ADP and revisited regularly.
- Leaders provide time for subject leaders and teachers to reflect and evaluate collaboratively the work that is being done in different subject areas to identify the next steps for school improvement.
- The impact of CPD attended and delivered is consistently evaluated. Senior leaders check in with all subject leaders following any CPD and monitoring activities to evaluate the choices that are being made and to support the subject leaders in planning and dissemination or further CPD for whole staff. This completes the cycle of curriculum improvement.
- We develop a school culture as a community of learners where training is specific and targeted, creating an ethos where staff feel able to ask for support and can receive this positively.
- Trust-wide training is crucial so that expertise is developed, and staff are supported beyond our individual school.
- We also make links with other trust schools to develop our, and support their, practice.

## **B. IMPLEMENTATION - How teaching leads to long-term learning**

### **Pedagogy – Shared Understanding**

**Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction** inform our understanding of high-quality teaching. Our leaders have clearly articulated these principles to our staff.

#### **1. CFU (Checking for Understanding) and Misconceptions**

Teachers do this using cold calling, probing with dialogue, low stakes quizzing and discussion.

#### **2. Making it stick – Retrieval Practice**

We build learning on learning and embed knowledge for pupils by drawing back into short-term memory prior learning from long-term memory.

#### **3. Assessment**

Assessment informs our teaching and helps embed knowledge. We understand how we assess formatively and leaders understand impact on teaching staff.

#### **4. Choice of materials**

Materials are chosen carefully by teachers to help rather than hinder learning e.g. clear knowledge organisers, working walls, high-quality focused tasks and agreed format teaching slides to reduce cognitive load.

#### **5. Work set is demanding and carefully planned**

We understand that memory is the residue of thought and desirable difficulties should be planned. Children need to be successful but should face a carefully planned element of challenge.

### **Agreed Lesson Structure**

We have a shared understanding of what we expect to see and what good quality teaching looks like. We teach knowledge to be remembered by using a consistent lesson structure which reduces cognitive load.

1. Recapping prior learning
2. Vocabulary
3. Teach
4. Talk Task
5. Task
6. Plenary

These are based on what we know about how children learn. We follow this structure for the following lessons: English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, Art, RE, MFL (DT, PSHE, Music, PE, Computing are currently in development).

### **Planning**

- Responsive Teaching: Our lesson planning is responsive and builds on formative assessment.
- Learning objectives span a series of lessons.

- We make short and long-term objectives explicit to pupils.
- Tasks are designed to support the learning objective and ensure pupils can gain the knowledge they need.
- We focus on achieving learning goals rather than task completion.
- In recognition of teacher workload, there are no expectations around the format of short-term planning
- Teachers plan from a shared, long-term curriculum map across all subjects.

### **Pupil Subject Knowledge**

We recognise there are different types of subject knowledge and plan to teach these. Various types of knowledge make up a subject and a subject builds on various forms of evidence and belief:

1. **Disciplinary Knowledge:** The knowledge of the distinctive processes inherent in studying a subject e.g. in History analyzing sources to build understanding of the past; in Science undertaking experiments and making predictions. Each subject involves the knowledge of traditional processes so pupils can participate in the disciplinary process themselves.
2. **Substantive Knowledge:** The core factual knowledge that makes up the subject. The things pupils should know and be able to explain. The key ideas, concepts, facts e.g. music notation.
3. **Procedural knowledge:** The knowledge needed to do something or perform a task e.g. how to add using column addition.
4. **Tacit/experiential knowledge:** Gained by experience and cannot be imparted by explanation e.g. pressure needed to create fine brushstrokes in art.

### **Subject Leaders**

Subject leaders have a fundamental role in developing our curriculum. They have ownership of their subject and have interlinked knowledge within and between each year group and across subject disciplines. Our Academy Development Plan is at the heart of our curriculum improvement. It is collaboratively written and reviewed. Subject Leaders' Action Plans plan development across each subject.

In History, Geography, Science and Art we have developed a well-sequenced knowledge rich curriculum using guidance from the Primary Knowledge Curriculum (PKC).

### **Adaptations**

We teach **inclusively**. We aim high and plan support to ensure we do not lower expectations, and support individual pupils to meet high standards. We monitor and adapt as responsively as possible. We have common challenging goals in mind for all pupils but we recognise that they will not all progress through them in the same way. We set pupils appropriate levels of practice without lowering longer-term expectations. We plan appropriate scaffolding to support remaining pupils reach the same standards.

We tier challenges and problems set (**Step for Depth**). We plan for learning core knowledge and a rich hinterland. We ensure our curriculum is rich in challenge, including elements that will stretch everyone in a class and higher attainers are always challenged. Higher attainers can move more rapidly to independent practice.

## **C.IMPACT**

### **How we know progress is being made and codify impact**

1. Pupils “know more, remember more and are able to do more”.
2. Books reflect the high-quality work pupils produce.
3. Pupils can talk confidently and fluently about the knowledge they have learned.
4. Our outcomes are in line with (or exceed) National standards.
5. Pupils are ready for the next stage of their education: EYFS for Y1; Y2 for KS2; Y6 for Secondary.
6. Pupils read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age.
7. Pupils are able to apply mathematical knowledge, concepts and procedures appropriately for their age.

### **Monitoring**

Our leaders have a strong working knowledge of what is being taught across the school and how the children are doing. Teachers, Subject and Senior Leaders evaluate the quality of our curriculum using a sequenced and specified monitoring calendar. Leaders receive regular release time to build knowledge of practice and outcomes beyond their own class. Information gathered is used to improve out quality of education.

Our annual monitoring schedule specifies the focus of monitoring (linked to the ADP and CPD schedule) e.g.

- Teacher subject knowledge;
- Clear explanations and modelling;
- Lesson structure and task design;
- Use of resources;
- Safeguarding;
- Behaviour management/systems;
- Consistency across classes.

### **Learning Walks**

Senior Leaders and Subject Leaders use learning walks rather than formal lesson observations to evaluate the quality of our education. Learning walks occur daily, undertaken by a member of SLT. Subject learning walks occur a minimum of half-termly (as set out in the Subject Leader Folders).

These have a clear focus (linked to the monitoring calendar). We observe:

- What is being taught.
- What children are expected to learn.
- How they are expected to learn it.
- Where this lesson fits in to their prior learning.
- What has been taught in books, on the walls.
- What children say about what they are learning.
- Where this lesson fits in with what children will learn next.

We record information gathered in a shared monitoring document, where follow up questions, actions and timings are noted. Actions are shared either in staff briefings or individual discussion and used to evaluate our current position (SEF); and inform future priorities, CPD and monitoring. Monitoring is shared through weekly updates in staff briefings where outcomes are shared and discussed openly. Where changes or improvements are needed we ensure that pupils retain the information and the knowledge. Leaders hold collaborative discussions with teachers.

### **Pupil Voice**

Leaders use scrutiny of books, alongside discussion with pupils, mapped against long term plans to know what is being planned is being taught. We triangulate evidence from learning walks with pupil discussion. We talk to children with their books as a prompt about the knowledge that has been taught and the links between different disciplines. We check whether pupils can link current learning to prior knowledge. We identify progression in vocabulary taught and how learning has been committed to long-term memory

### **Assessment**

The three reasons we assess are:

1. To help pupils **remember** (*e.g. recap prior learning*).
2. For **teachers to know what pupils remember** and therefore what needs teaching/re-teaching.
3. **Evaluate the quality of the curriculum** and where changes need to be made in order to ensure pupils remember the specified core knowledge and build understanding of key concepts.

### **Statutory**

We use the EYFS profile, Year 1 Phonics Screening, Year 2 SATs, Year 4 MTC and Year 6 SATS to measure our outcomes against national standards.

### **Summative**

At Termly Trust Assessment points (Autumn/Spring/Summer) we assess Reading (DIBELS) and Maths (HeadStart). These are used for benchmarking, as well as to identify pupil gaps and inform planning.

### **Formative**

We use formative assessment constantly, throughout every lesson to inform our teaching.

*Teachers and leaders understand the limitations of different types of assessment and have considered workload when making decisions around assessment structures.*

### **Assessment of the wider curriculum**

In the wider curriculum, as in English and Maths, we routinely recap prior learning through multiple choice quizzes and assessment tasks. We also use a half-termly unit feedback form to assess learning in the wider curriculum. Teachers find out what pupils remember and re-teach and scaffold to support.

## **D. SPECIFIC CURRICULUM AREAS**

### **ENGLISH**

#### **Reading Standards**

- Improving pupil reading is central to our curriculum as a whole.
- Our goal is for pupils to be able to read relevant texts independently.

#### **Reading Curriculum**

- Reading is rigorously taught, monitored and sequenced.
- Our English subject leader has ownership of our Reading Canon and Curriculum (based on *Reading Reconsidered* techniques) which specifies which high-quality texts are taught and when. Prior reading is built on e.g. The classic *Legends of King Arthur* in Year 2 are revisited in Year 4 with *The Iliad*.
- We use *Scarborough's Rope model* of reading to inform our teaching practice.
- We plan reading routines involving tasks to be completed independently, linked to checking processes that explore how well they have understanding the material e.g. retrieval practice, comprehension tasks, structured discussions on set reading.
- The level of reading is pitched to provide a good balance of challenge and accessibility, focusing on the knowledge content of each subject curriculum.
- Pupils are required to read for meaning by engaging in comprehension activities e.g. answer questions based on text; summarizing key points; applying content to problem solving activities; and following written instructions.
- We plan opportunities for pupils to learn about topics by reading about them.
- Activities are designed so reading is embedded in the routines of lessons e.g. part of our curriculum is developing pupils' capacity to read e.g. historic or scientific texts.
- Pupils' diet of reading has a high word count spanning multiple non-fiction areas in addition to a range of fiction. e.g. We have use progressive sets of class bibles, ensuring reading opportunities are maximized across the curriculum and all pupils have access to reading bible stories at an appropriate level.

#### **Reading Culture**

- We prioritise reading and foster a love of reading through a strong reading culture.
- We promote a public and widely shared sense that reading is at the heart of learning.
- Reading is a joyful, enriching and useful part of everyday experience at school e.g. ring-fenced story time.

#### **Early Reading**

- Our Phonics programme is a progression model.
- We use the DfE approved *Sounds Write* (systematic synthetic linguistic) Phonics programme which teaches word recognition and fluency to automaticity.
- Staff are experts in Early Reading. All teaching staff are trained in the *Sounds Write* programme. All attend refresher training.
- The *Sounds Write* programme's content and sequence supports progress with a keep up (not

catch up) system in place to ensure lessons are repeated the same day for slower graspers. Pupils who fall behind are supported to catch up.

- Reading books match the sounds that children know. We use *Sounds Write* books and phonic books (all fully decodable). Books sent home revisit and consolidate learning 1-2 sounds behind those currently being taught. Phonics is taught from the very start of Reception.
- We use parent workshops to engage pupils in the reading process.

## **Reading in Key Stage 2**

- We teach spelling through phonics. Our *Sounds Write* phonics programme runs from Year R to Year 6, teaching 175 Sound spelling correspondences.
- We use book corner books as a bank of children's literature in each KS2 classroom. The teacher directs pupils to carefully curated books.
- In Key Stage 2 books sent home are selected by the class teacher.

## **Vocabulary**

- We explicitly teach all the words/phrases needed to understand a concept or text.
- We use teaching sequences, working walls and Knowledge Organisers to reinforce these.
- We consciously rehearse vocabulary.

## **Assessment**

Formative assessment takes place regularly to check the children's understanding. This includes low-stake spelling quizzes, linked to their phonic learning and from the statutory word lists and key vocabulary, as well as factual information of the context and knowledge of grammatical functions. Previous learning is re-visited to embed the knowledge within pupils' long-term memory.

Termly summative assessments check for decoding ability and fluency testing using DIBELS. Evidence indicates that generic reading comprehension tests assess children's vocabulary and background knowledge more than their reading ability. We therefore do not use generic reading comprehension tests. Reading fluency tests are a better indicator of children's reading progress. The DIBELS assessments identify whether children are reading at an age-appropriate level and give detailed diagnostic information on key aspects of reading, so that teachers know exactly where and how to give additional support.

## **WRITING**

Our integrated writing curriculum (developed alongside other teachers in our trust) ensures that learning is contextual and purposeful, and provides opportunities to enable children to build upon previous knowledge taught throughout the school.

Through the exposure of high-quality texts studied, the pupils at Stanground St John's will learn to appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage and we develop children's writing skills through explicit skills teaching, vocabulary development and the ability to articulate thoughts and ideas. By the end of their primary school journey, pupils should be able to write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.

At Stanground St John's, we promote positive attitudes and enthusiasm towards writing, as well as promoting confidence and competence with the structure of the English language and how to manipulate it. We also ensure a progressive development of spelling, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary across the school, in line with the National Curriculum. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others.

### **Assessment**

We use Comparative Judgement through the '*No More Marking*' assessment throughout the year to assess our pupils' writing against a national standard. All teachers are involved in each judging window.

## **MATHS**

We follow the *White Rose Maths Curriculum* from EYFS to Year 6. This evidence-informed scheme provides us with a carefully mapped sequence of work for each year group where small steps are taught in order to achieve mastery. Our learners follow a concrete, pictorial, abstract (CPA) approach and all children work through the sequence together. When gaps are identified, children are picked up for pre and post teaching each day.

Lessons are planned using an agreed lessons structure. This includes prior learning, key vocabulary (including oral rehearsal), a talk task, teaching slides and a step for depth. This gives the children consistency across the curriculum. Teachers are expected to use the White Rose content as a guide for their lessons, adapting these to the needs of their children.

### **Assessment**

For Years 1 to 6, we use

1. *HeadStart Maths* tests termly, which cover:
  - Number and place value
  - Addition and subtraction (Year 6 includes multiplication and division)
2. *White Rose* End of Unit Assessments
3. *White Rose* End of Term Assessments

We use these formatively to inform interventions and adaptations.

It is a statutory requirement that Year 4 pupils undergo a Multiplication Tables Check in the Summer term. This checks their knowledge for the 2-12 times table. In order for children to prepare for these assessments they are set homework weekly on TT Rockstars. They are also given daily opportunities to learn and practise these from Year 3.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

We use the *Emmanuel Project* to form our R.E. curriculum. We have reduced the content covered, focused on a small number of core concepts in order to enable a deeper understanding by pupils.

A selection of cohesive core concepts have been chosen using a 'spiral' curriculum, where pupils revisit these core concepts in different contexts as they move through the school. These varied encounters deepen pupils'

understanding and contribute to the 'religious literacy' of pupils, which we interpret as including their ability to understand the nature and impact of religions and beliefs in the contemporary world.

We encourage 'theological enquiry' (pupils asking appropriate questions of their own and develop the skills of enquiring into religion and belief). 'Enquiry' does not mean free enquiry or discovery learning, where pupils are left to find out for themselves the answer to complex religious questions. Teacher-directed learning is an important part of this approach, whereby teachers structure the content in ways that are accessible and meaningful to pupils, to build their knowledge and understanding.

### **HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, SCIENCE & ART**

We have worked with the *Primary Knowledge Curriculum* to develop progressive, ambitious curriculum relevant to our pupils.

### **MUSIC, DT, MFL (SPANISH), COMPUTING & P.E.**

Subject leaders are working on developing these curriculum areas 2022-23, in line with the PKC model, to ensure they are well-sequenced, progressive, ambitious and knowledge-rich.