

Curriculum Policy

Dame Catherine Harpur's School and Nursery



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School Governance Signature (Chair of Management Team)	A. Harmer / S. Gosling
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Regularity of review	At least every 2 years

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1. Curriculum aims

Our curriculum aims/intends to:

- Provide a broad and balanced education for all pupils
- Enable pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of the world around them and ensure that we are developing creative and critical thinkers who know how to question, challenge and give opinion in appropriate ways.
- broaden pupils' horizons through a range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities
- provide opportunities for *all* pupils to develop high levels of literacy and numeracy required for success in adult life
- provide an appropriate range of opportunities and experiences to allow every individual to succeed in the next stage in their education
- ensure that all pupils are able to thrive and develop as healthy individuals and understand how to stay safe
- Support pupils' physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active
- Promote a positive attitude towards learning and develop a strength of character and resilience that will help pupils to overcome the challenges they are likely to encounter in adult life
- Ensure equal access to learning, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support
- Promote the learning and development of our youngest children and ensure they are ready to join in with all aspects of our school curriculum

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements for academies to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the [Academies Act 2010](#).

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's [Governance Handbook](#).

In addition, this policy acknowledges the requirements for promoting the learning and development of children set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#).

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board (SMT)

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and to ensure that children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, with enough teaching time in order to ensure agreed requirements are met
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)

3.2 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, reflect the aims of the school and meet the needs of individual pupils.
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board (SMT)
- The school has effective procedures for assessment.
- The governing board (SMT) is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

3.3 Other staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

4. Organisation and planning

At Dame Catherine's we have developed our own curriculum. We listen to ideas suggested by our children and families in developing our curriculum, ensuring that we provide engaging activities which capture the interest of our children. For example by asking the children what knowledge, understanding and skills they already have around a theme or question, asking for their ideas about what they would like to learn and asking for ways in which parents might support, we can build on prior learning, share strengths and develop a real sense of ownership for our children.

We have adapted the National Curriculum to provide a richer and more thorough educational environment for our pupils whilst ensuring that the school's philosophy is not compromised. Recognising the importance of transition for children, for the core subjects of English and Maths, we keep in line with the National Curriculum, but in our own way. For English we feel that it is important to emphasise interaction in speaking. Discussion and debate are certainly a strength at our school and there is plenty of good quality time spent on reading. We are fortunate in having an excellent library of books and often get donations.

Our leadership has a clear focus in ensuring that we have a wide range of expertise, despite being a small school. As we have a greater capacity for flexibility and a better staffing ratio than other schools, our aim is to develop our curriculum opportunities so that children benefit from these specialisms. This is especially useful for our older children. These specialisms include music, languages and our own form of forest school within our unique environment. Our school ensures that it provides the broad provision it needs to for children on roll at our school using our expertise, with staff who are well-trained in specific areas as well as core subjects such as English, maths and science. For children who flexi-school, it is our responsibility to ensure that they have a balanced curriculum, so we will need to discuss with individual families how this will work. We understand and respect the fact that our part-time children access some subjects at home or through other home-school groups and therefore they need to know what to expect in terms of 'diet' when their children join us on specific days. Our termly overviews which centre around a broad challenge question provide context for families and an idea of whether certain subjects might be taught on certain days.

We have a delicate balance between flexibility to allow for in the moment opportunities (known as 'off-piste' at Dame Catherine's) and continuity for groups of children. There is a general aim for some subjects to be taught on a specific day most of the time. Equally, to ensure that we have a full breadth, there is a cross-curricular approach, and one where we might focus more in depth on a particular subject or group of subjects for a specific amount of time. Themed days are popular and allow us to learn together across the school.

We aim, by the end of 2022, to provide an updated coverage and progression document for each subject, which are extensive documents outlining our vision for each subject and the knowledge, understanding and skills we intend to cover over time. These also outline the themes chosen over several years. These will be available on our website, along with the termly curriculum overviews.

Please see the curriculum section of the website for above documents or ask at the office for further details.

Information about our wider curriculum subjects.

Science: this subject focuses heavily on investigational skills and working scientifically. We are keen to take our science learning outside where possible too. Whilst we ensure that we cover the content in the national Curriculum, we don't tie ourselves to this exclusively as there are so many more fascinating areas to explore. Our children love to ask questions, so this takes us into many different areas of learning. Making a non-Newtonian glow in the dark fluid from potatoes, cooking on a home-made solar cooker, inflating balloons using popping candy, creating a tornado in a bottle – there are hours of fun to be had when learning science with us.

Languages

We know from talking to many families, that children learning languages is important to them and a number of children in school are fortunate in being able to communicate in more than one language. We have staff who have a degree in modern languages. Children will experience a range of language learning opportunities during their primary education at Dame Catherine's. We provide further opportunities for them to learn and explore other languages and cultures through our wider curriculum as well as having the opportunity to focus on one or two specific languages.

All children in school learn at least one language. In 2021-22 Spanish is taught throughout the school, including our 3-4 year olds who love their songs and games in Spanish. Our 7-11 year olds have also learnt German over the past 2 years and are continuing to do so. The nature of language learning is that there will be other opportunities in our specific curriculum questions, so children who aren't in school every day will gain some access to some language learning. For example, we will continue to integrate French into some curriculum challenges with our older children.

Music, drama and performance are important to us at Dame Catherine's. Several of our staff play instruments and we have recently started to create small groups and bands so that the children can enjoy performing with us. We have some children who learn instruments outside of school, and we are keen to develop opportunities for them to play, as well as provide some opportunities within school to experience learning an instrument.

We have the skills in school to teach keyboard / piano, trumpet or cornet, flute, saxophone, euphonium. We are currently providing keyboard sessions to 7-11 year olds as part of our music curriculum.

We provide a lot of opportunities for children to develop their acting skills, and are lucky to have a staff member, who has an immense talent for script writing. Our unique films incorporate the children's interests and talents. We recognise how important it is to our parents that we know their children well and that we develop our learning around their strengths and interests. Projects such as the films give our children an opportunity to 'have a go' in a low-risk environment where they feel at home and to take risks and develop their skills in whatever way they choose. We are all proud to see how much the children have developed in confidence throughout this experience. These certainly don't replace live performances but recent times have taught us that finding 'a different way' brings its own rewards. "

Outdoor learning and environmental science

This is a common interest for families to explore especially amongst our younger age groups. As a school, children spend a significant part of a week outside. This is through our playtimes which are a good length and which provide children with a good range of resources to access in their play. We have been developing our space outside of the classrooms over the past month and this is still ongoing. Staffing we have in place means that the continuous provision on offer for our younger children will incorporate activities outside. The easy access to outside for ALL groups means that we frequently use the outdoor space for learning across all subjects.

We run specific sessions within our curriculum which are aligned to the forest school principles. As a school we were Forest School accredited 3 years ago. We like to make the best use of our outdoor provision and have plans underway to further develop the spaces at the top of the garden so that they enable us to do this. To be hands-on in a natural environment is something which is important to our school. Forest schools were largely established to support children to develop confidence and self-esteem through this learning. For us, developing the confidence of our children is at the centre of all we do, so our school approaches to learning outdoors are not an 'add on' but integral to our learning at Dame Catherine's and in alignment with all areas of our curriculum. One staff member has a degree in environmental science and another has a specialism in technology, which is allowing us to re-develop this area of the curriculum in a way which best fits the children at our school

History, geography, RE, design technology, art and PE and information technology

We see our history curriculum a real strength and have a specialist historian as part of our staff team. We incorporate opportunities to role play, explore artifacts and debate. We feel that it is crucial for children in primary school to be exposed to a full breadth of historical periods, which include world history as well as local and UK history. We incorporate National Curriculum history content into our curriculum at Dame Catherine's, but we also focus on modern history to a far greater extent than the National Curriculum. The more children know about the past the better prepared they will be for the future because by remembering the past - they will grow to realise that they are responsible for building a legacy for the generations that follow them. As the national curriculum is rather narrow, we write our own history curriculum.

Similar is true for geography. For example, our coverage of areas of the world is broader than might be the case in some schools. We link education for social responsibility into much of our work in geography.

Design technology and art is often done through projects and we make the most of school visits to help us to broaden opportunities. For example, children have been to a pottery museum and workshop, visited the MAD museum in Stratford and taken part in a DT focused day at Cromford Mills. We provide a lot of opportunities for cooking in school and have some staff which are particularly interested in this area. We even managed to produce our own 'Save the Planet' cookbook. We have a member of staff who has expertise in textiles and another who contributes expertise with art.

We provide weekly PE sessions led by our own staff in the village hall or outside. We have access to a very large sports ground which is 3 minutes walk away from us. Our teaching assistants have experience in teaching different areas of PE including martial arts and dance.

We embed Social Moral Spiritual and Cultural provision and PSHE in our curriculum. RE is also integrated into the curriculum to enable the children to support children learning about a wide range of faiths and beliefs and in context.

We have a small number of laptops and ipads in school which are used to support learning. As children move to the older class, they become involved with video editing projects and we regularly use green screening. Children become familiar with WeVideo to edit their own videos.

How we involve children and families in our planning and ensure that our curriculum fits the needs of our children

We listen to ideas suggested by our children and families in developing our curriculum, which ensures that we provide engaging activities which capture the interest of our children.

At the beginning of every new thematic question, we provide a child and family friendly draft overview of our ideas, sharing a number of 'mini themes' in the form of questions. We ask children, along with parents, to share with us what they already know, what they can contribute (expertise and resources,) what they would like to learn, what further ideas they have and any questions they have.

This information is used as a firmer basis for planning and especially as a way of being able to cater for individuals – their interests and their needs. This process provides a good basis for supporting inclusion.

Our "off piste" approach enables children to bring ideas and learning to the classroom to share with others and provides staff with the capacity to take the ideas further if they or the children see a valuable opportunity.

See our EYFS information for any additional information about how our early years curriculum is delivered.

5. Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEN
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every subject, wherever possible within our broad curriculum, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report.

6. Monitoring arrangements

Governors monitor whether the school is providing a “broad and balanced curriculum” which includes the required subjects, through:

- Presentations at meetings
- Regular visits to school
- Individual meetings with staff and leaders
- Discussions with children
- Viewing key documentation such as curriculum material.

The way subjects are taught throughout the school:

- Informal and formal discussions and collaborative planning and review

- Learning walks
- Reviewing pupil work
- Discussions with children

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- EYFS policy
- Assessment policy
- SEN policy and information report
- Equality information and objectives