



Birches First School

Believe, Grow, Succeed



Our Curriculum

We take every opportunity to enrich the curriculum with an extensive range of enjoyable and exciting activities for the children.

Birches First School staff recognise that our curriculum comprises all learning and experiences planned for the pupils by the school; these experiences are planned to meet the aims of the school.

As a first school in a three-tier system, the nurture we offer our children during their early and middle years at Birches blends with the development of maturity and independence skills (and life skills) that will serve them as they move into the middle school phase.

The curriculum at Birches First School is planned following a semi thematic Based approach wherever this is possible. This is not, however, contrived where it is not appropriate. Links are made between subjects and texts to engage children with their learning and enable children to make connections and apply their skills in a range of ways. Topics change each term.

English and Maths are taught daily. Wherever possible, links are made with the over-arching topic, especially in English lessons. Where basic English and Maths skills are taught in a discrete lesson, children are then encouraged to use these skills within their independent work in other contexts. ICT skills are taught weekly, but ICT is fully embedded into the whole curriculum, and children are given every opportunity to use their ICT skills in other contexts to enhance, deepen or broaden their learning.

Curriculum Implementation

School Expectations

All stakeholders have high expectations of themselves and others.

Teachers are expected to impart knowledge accurately and with enthusiasm which generates high levels of commitment from children.

We expect children to make sustained progress in lessons.

We expect teachers to support children in developing independence.

We expect teachers to systematically check understanding, intervening in a timely manner when needed.

We expect children to be challenged.

We expect teachers to regularly provide high quality feedback to children.

Effective Teaching

At Birches First School we promote an ethos of high aspiration and ambition; encouraging all children to reach or exceed national expectations, to fulfil their early promise and develop latent potential. High expectations of progress apply equally to children working above, at, or below age related expectations, including those who have been identified as SEND.

There is an expectation of participation, fulfilment and success; and teaching and learning is characterised by ambitious objectives, challenging personal targets, rapid intervention to keep pupils on track and rigorous assessment to check and maintain pupil progress.

There are clear plans to support those who are struggling to maintain progress and these pupils are identified well.

Key elements:

1. Quality first teaching

Focused lesson design with sharp objectives;

High demands of child engagement with their learning;

High levels of interaction for all children;

Appropriate use of teacher questioning, modelling and explaining;

Emphasis on learning through dialogue;

An expectation that children will develop resilience and accept responsibility for their own learning and work independently;

Regular use of encouragement and praise to motivate children.

2. Target setting

Individual children's progress tracked;

Strengths and weaknesses identified supporting planning and intervention

Data collected on a regular basis and discussed with staff as part of pupil progress meetings

Children have regular opportunities to discuss their progress.

Teachers actively involve children in setting and reviewing their progress towards their targets;

Teaching, interventions and revision programmes are adjusted in the light of progress children make; Parents and carers are regularly updated on their child's progress;

Processes run across the whole school to ensure consistency and are regularly evaluated by SLT

to ensure that the needs of all children are being met.

3. Focussed assessment

Rigorous assessment and tracking of children's performance takes place to inform classroom practice allowing children to make good progress and close attainment gaps;

Formative, summative, standardised and best fit assessments used effectively;

Assessment for Learning (AFL) is evident across the school – learning objectives, success criteria, self and peer evaluation

4. Intervention

Individuals and groups who are not making sufficient progress are identified;

Provision for intervention is mapped according to need;

Plans and provisions are put into place;

Learners who are gifted are enabled to perform beyond the norms expected for their year group where appropriate;

Interventions are evaluated and relevant adjustments are made;
Leaders regularly meet to discuss current and future interventions engaging in dialogue around the impact of interventions, potential barriers and further actions required.

5. Learning environment

Organisation of the classroom/learning environment adapted to the children's learning needs;

The use of learning resources and ICT developed to allow children to work independently and successfully;

Make effective use of other spaces – 'outdoor classroom', ICT suite, hall space;

Displays to be a mixture of celebration of children's work, supportive resources and information.

6. Curriculum organisation

The curriculum is designed to cater for the needs and interests of a full range of learners including: Gifted and talented

Learners with learning difficulties, including those with speech, language and communication needs Learners who are learning English as an additional language

Boys and girls

Children who are in care.

Learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Flexibility is built into the curriculum organisation and delivery to ensure greater coherence from the children's perspectives.

7. Extended curriculum

Birches First School offers a range of 'out of hours' activities and clubs which enhance and extend the basic curriculum; We ensure access for all;

Access to other services is provided or arranged, including health and social services Supporting children's wider needs

The school maintains close communication with parents and carers;

We develop and maintain multi agency links to support vulnerable children;

8. Effective Learning

We acknowledge that people learn in different ways and we recognise the need to develop pedagogies which enable all children to learn in ways which suit them. We offer ways for children to learn in different ways including:

investigation and problem solving; open ended tasks; reasoning; research and finding out, with independent access to a range of resources; group work, paired work and independent work;

effective questioning; presentation and drama; use of ICT; visitors and educational visits; creative activities, designing and making; use of multimedia, visual or aural stimulus; participation in physical or athletic activity; homework; extra-curricular clubs and activities.

Trips and Visits

We plan a series of trips throughout the year for each year group and these are communicated to parents at the start of the academic year. The trips are directly linked to our topic work to bring learning to life. We organise a trip to the seaside for children in Year 2 and a residential trip for our Year 4 pupils. Year 4 will spend two nights away in a local centre and this will help to prepare for longer stays as they venture further afield in their Middle Schools.

Workshops and Specialists

Each year group will take part in a variety of workshops throughout the academic year. These will link to their topic work or to a whole school theme. We invite specialists from a range of outside agencies. We invite parents to use their skills each year and this enables us to form connections with new organisations or to facilitate a workshop/talk led by a parent.

Sparkle Days and Themed Days

Each term, classes hold a Sparkle Day to launch their new topic and engage and excite the children. We also have several themed days throughout the year designed to promote and celebrate specific areas of the curriculum eg. Eco-Week, Arts Day, Multi-faith Day, Maths Day, STEM day and Sports week. We also incorporate national days of significance such as eg World Book Day, Remembrance, Internet Safety Day, Fairtrade Fortnight and Black History Month as well as anniversaries of significant events (100 years since the end of WW1) and local/national elections.

The Role of Governors

Our Governors are involved in monitoring the consistent approach to Teaching and Learning at Birches First School. Governors monitor practice in the following ways:

Reports and presentations received at Governors meetings, ie: Book Scrutiny, Subject Leader updates, Link Governor reports, school visits to observe classroom practice in role as Link Governor;

The Role of Parents

We believe that parents have a crucial role in helping their child to learn. We do all that we can to inform parents about the progress of their child by:

Sending home a termly learning map

Holding regular Parent's Evenings and sending out interim reports

Inviting parents in to the school to share in their child's learning;

Inviting parents (and grandparents) into school for special lunches.

Holding parent workshops where we explain assessment procedures and teaching and learning strategies;

Holding open afternoons and meet the staff evenings.

Close partnership between staff and the school PFA

Impact

The impact of our curriculum will be measured by comparison with national data for statutory assessments as well as our own internal data and monitoring systems. In addition to this, impact will be judged with regard for how well our curriculum and school practice helps to develop children in well-rounded individuals who are resilient, ambitious, conscientious and motivated. Successful learners who are prepared for the next stage of their journey.

Comparison will be made with national data for

% of EYFS pupils achieving a 'Good level of development' (GLD)

% of children passing the Phonics Screening Test at the end of Year 1

And

End of KS1 % of children working towards or at the expected standard and at Greater depth in reading, writing and maths.

