

Notre Dame Preparatory School and Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Policy

NOTRE DAME SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

In the spirit of Saint Jeanne de Lestonnac, our foundress:

'We are all educators.....'

Accompanying young people in their efforts to build their lives for today and tomorrow.'

These words embody our Mission.

Notre Dame is a Roman Catholic Independent School with a strong ecumenical tradition, respecting the faiths and cultures of all members of our community.

As a foundation of the Company of Mary Our Lady (COMOL) the School has a distinctive ethos which places at the service of society and the Church, an educational legacy acquired from over 400 years of existence. The Order has constantly developed and updated its educational and pedagogical work to be relevant to the societal needs of the time. The Order's distinct educational style, embodied in its 'Educational Project' emphasizes the following:

- A Christian humanist education which embraces the ideal of becoming new men and women in order to build a new world.
- A quality education which seeks to be efficient in every aspect of the educational process.
- An education for solidarity, social responsibility and development which contributes to the transformation and improvement of each context.
- An education that goes beyond the classroom, seeking other educative opportunities which foster an integral education and the experience of inter-culturality.
- An education carried out with others, working together and complementing one another.
- An education offered as a service through men and women educators who bear witness, by their word and life, to the values and principles we wish to inculcate.

The School's aims in order to achieve this are as follows:

- To develop a secure and stimulating environment in which pupils are encouraged and challenged to fulfil their potential, both academically and physically and gain an appreciation of the world in which they live.
- To develop in pupils a responsible and independent attitude towards work and their roles in society and inculcate a desire to contribute to the wider community.
- To ensure that the school atmosphere is such that all pupils learn to live amicably together, gaining a keen awareness of others, their feelings and their needs, and to begin to build a reasoned set of attitudes, values and beliefs based on Christian principles.
- To learn to respect each pupil as a valued individual and to imbue feelings of confidence, independence and, above all, self-esteem.
- To liaise with parents, enlisting their co-operation and interest in order to promote a happy partnership working in trust.
- To prepare each pupil for the next stage of their education ensuring that it is appropriate to their individual abilities, aptitudes and needs.

Introduction

Notre Dame is a Roman Catholic Independent School with a strong ecumenical tradition, respecting the Faiths and cultures of all members of our community. Our mission is built on a 400 year tradition, strengthened by the presence of the Sisters of the Company of Mary Our Lady.

Notre Dame provides a full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (in accordance with Section 8 of the Education Act 1996) by providing them all with experiences and opportunities to learn and make progress. Our school's curriculum includes all planned lessons and activities to promote an education for solidarity, social responsibility and development which contributes to the transformation and improvement of each context. The curriculum supports the school's aims and ethos to develop a secure and stimulating environment in which pupils are encouraged and challenged to fulfil their potential, both academically and physically and gain an appreciation of the world in which they live.

Pupils join our Pre-Prep from the age of 2 where they follow their own detailed plans to allow pupils to learn creatively through exploration and respect for others in a nurturing environment. The education provided within the Pre-Prep for children below the compulsory school age ensures that the activities are appropriate for their educational needs in relation to their personal, social, emotional and physical development and their communication and language skills.

Pupils at the end of Reception will join the Infant department in Year 1 and then the Junior department at the beginning of Year 3 through to Year 6 where they are taught in more formal classes and are encouraged to build upon their learning and experiences from Pre-Prep.

The EYFS forms the basis of the teaching from Pre-Nursery through to Reception. From Year 1 to the end of Key Stage 2, the new National Curriculum (2014) is a focus for teaching and learning, although Heads of Department have the discretion to decide which aspects are most relevant for their subjects. At Notre Dame we offer a considerably broader curriculum and yet it is balanced in line with the schools Mission statement and aims.

We have extensive extra-curricular activities which are offered to enrich the children's experience and provide opportunities for analytical, creative and physical skill development.

Promotion of fundamental British Values

Each Academic year the Head teacher or member of the SLT will deliver a specific assembly regarding:

- Democracy
- Rule of Law
- Individual Liberty
- Mutual Respect and Tolerance for those of different Faiths and Beliefs

This will be included in the assembly rota for the year.

It is important that by Year 6 children will have:

- An understanding of how citizens can influence decision making through the democratic process.
- An appreciation that living under the Rule of Law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety.
- An understanding that there is separation of power between the executive and the judiciary that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence.
- An understanding that the freedom to hold other Faiths and Beliefs is protected in Law.
- An acceptance that people having different Faiths and Beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour.
- An understanding of the importance of identifying and combating discrimination.

Please refer to Policy on SMSC on promoting British Values. The school will not support political indoctrination of pupils, teachers will not offer partisan views or political views.

All views will be balanced and it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that the balance is retained when teaching.

Principles and values

We seek the highest standards for all our children and believe that fulfilment comes through the recognition of nurturing of individual potential in all areas of endeavour:

- By emphasizing personal, moral and spiritual development, based on Gospel values, enabling each member to become a valued participant in the life of the community

- By striving for personal academic excellence, offering learning experiences which will challenge each pupil.
- By providing wide-ranging opportunities, giving experience and seeking to identify and develop talents in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education.

Aims for the curriculum and inclusion

In Line with the mission statement of the school all pupils are given a broad, balanced and relevant education which provides continuity and progression and takes individual differences, able gifted and talented pupils and pupils with SEND into account. The broad curriculum is designed to meet the requirements for entry into secondary education, to British society and the wider world and at least meets the requirements of the National Curriculum for each age group and ability. We believe all pupils have the right to learn and make progress throughout the school.

Pupils with SEND, specific or special needs, including those with learning difficulties, pupils with a statement, and those learning English as a second or third language, will be taught appropriate subject matter, and planning for differentiation will take account of aptitude, and methods appropriate for each individual. Under the School action category of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2011, the curriculum will also fulfil the requirements of any statement or educational psychologists report and EHC's will be provided for all such pupils, to ensure appropriate access to the curriculum.

Pupils will be taught personal, social and health education (PSHEE) which promotes the school's aims and ethos, and teaches the pupils appropriate cultural and British Values, such as Democracy, individual liberty, respect for the rule of law and public institutions, and respect and tolerance for faith and belief.

Pupils will be encouraged to respect others with particular regard to the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

- a. Age
- b. Disability
- c. Gender reassignment
- d. Marriage and civil partnership
- e. Pregnancy and maternity
- f. Race
- g. Religion or belief
- h. Sex
- i. Sexual orientation

Breadth of the curriculum

Notre Dame will offer pupils an education that encompasses experience in linguistic, mathematical, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. Pupils will acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills.

The School, in line with its mission will:

- cater for the needs of individual children from all ethnic and social groups, including the most able and those who are experiencing learning difficulties or differences with a programme of activities appropriate to their needs;
- ensure where a pupil has a statement, education which fulfils its requirement.
- facilitate children's acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and qualities which will help them to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically, spiritually, morally and aesthetically, so that they may become independent, responsible, useful, thoughtful, confident, compassionate, tolerant and considerate members of the community including those below compulsory school age (nursery);
- ensure that pupils below compulsory school age,(EYFS) have a programme of activities will be provided appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills
- to ensure that pupils acquire speaking, listening , literacy and numeracy skills;
- create and maintain an exciting and stimulating learning environment;
- ensure that each child's education has continuity and progression enabling an opportunity to learn and make progress;
- ensure that subject matter is appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with a SEND, or are able gifted and talented and therefore ensure there is a differentiated match between the child and the tasks , rather than relying on outcome;
- provide an appropriate curricular balance amongst the competing and sometimes conflicting aims of education;
- ensure appropriate careers guidance for pupils receiving secondary education (see Senior School Policy);
- recognise the crucial role which parents play in their children's education and make every effort to encourage parental involvement in the educational process;
- treat all children in a respectful and dignified way in accordance with the equal opportunities and behaviour management policies and the ethos of the school.
- Provide adequate preparation for pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life and the next stage of their education.
- recognise the role of the Company of Mary Our Lady in supporting the educational philosophy of the school as stated in the mission statement, and of the school in living up to the mission

Children will:

- learn to be adaptable, to solve problems in a variety of situations, to work independently and collaboratively as members of a team;
- be developing their ability to make reasoned judgements and choices, based on interpretation and evaluation of relevant information from a variety of sources;
- be happy, cheerful and well balanced;
- be enthusiastic and eager to put their best into all activities;
- begin acquiring a set of moral values, e.g. integrity, honesty, sincerity, compassion, personal responsibility, on which to base their own behaviour;
- be expected to behave in a dignified and acceptable way and learn to become responsible for their actions;
- care for and take pride in their school;
- be developing tolerance, respect and appreciation of the feelings and capabilities of others in an unbiased way; including tolerance of faith and belief
- be developing non-sexist and non-racist attitudes;
- know how to think and solve problems mathematically in a variety of situations using concepts of number, algebra, measurement, shape and space, and handling data;
- be able to listen and read to gain information and for pleasure, and be able to convey their meaning accurately and appropriately through speech and writing for a variety of purposes;
- be developing an enquiring mind and scientific approach to problems;
- creativity
- imagination
- have an opportunity to solve problems using technological skills;
- be capable of communicating their knowledge and feelings through various art forms including art/craft, music, drama and be acquiring appropriate techniques which will enable them to develop their inventiveness and creativity;
- Know about geographical, historical and social aspects of the local environment and the national heritage. They should be aware of other times and places and recognise links among family, local, national and international events;
- have some knowledge of the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church together with other Christians and world religions;
- be developing agility, physical co-ordination and confidence in and through movement;
- Know how to apply the basic principles of health, hygiene and safety.

Differentiation.

There are many forms of this which include:

1. By response: children answer at their own levels. To be truly differentiated these should often include open-ended tasks. Setting the same closed task for all children is not differentiation and continual use of this would be criticised.
2. By text or resource: the same objectives can be met by presenting texts of varying vocabulary or complexity to different children within the group.

3. By task: layered activities, different starting points or different questions for the same text, questions that get harder
4. By dialogue: Using a mixture of language to communicate with and stretch understanding, explaining in different ways to different children.
5. By pace: fast tracking, setting individual work, or moving quickly through a basic task and then to extension work
6. By content: Children create time by their speed at the basic curriculum and can then study areas not usually presented because there is not time
7. By independence or responsibility: children setting or directing their own work, tied in with personal or directed interests.

EYFS curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) follow their own detailed plans. These mirror the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework in the following areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
- Physical Development**
- Communication and Language**
- Literacy**
- Mathematics**
- Understanding of the world**
- Expressive Arts and design**

Reception Class are included in EYFS

- The children in Reception are also assessed regularly in language and literacy using the Read Write Inc. programme. This information is used to group them appropriately and highlights the children that need extending and those requiring extra reinforcement have ten minute booster sessions in small groups at another point of the school day.
- Reception class will nonetheless be taught according to the principles of EYFS education (planning and experience offered) and will be accorded opportunities for free learning and play activities throughout the day.

The curriculum is enhanced with various lessons led by subject specialists, such as music and PE for all children in the EYFS and also

- Spanish,
- swimming
- Ballet
- Drama from Reception.

The school has developed an outdoor explorer School which is used throughout the curriculum for children in Nursery through to Rec. This offers the pupils the opportunity to gain a knowledge and appreciation of the natural world in a creative and interactive outdoor environment.

Activities within the EYFS are planned so the children benefit from both teacher led and child led opportunities. Informal and formal assessments are ongoing and inform planning so each child is working at the correct level. We have our own assessment pack which ensures that children's progress is carefully monitored throughout Nursery and Reception. Children have two year checks in Nursery and these are discussed with parents along with 'next steps'. These assessments form our own version of the profile. Teacher knowledge and observations of both practical and written activities are used to decide if a child has achieved the various goals. Photos, comments and written work all contribute to our evidence base.

Subjects

Subjects taught will give pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social education, and physical, aesthetic and creative education.

Years 1,2 and 3

- Religious Education
- Mathematics
- English
- Science
- ICT
- Spanish
- Music
- Drama
- Art and design
- TASK (encompassing humanities)
- Physical education including swimming and dance
- PSHEE
- Sport

Setting: The girls are taught in form classes for the majority of these lessons except for specialist Subjects

Years 4, 5 and 6

- Religious Education
- Mathematics
- English
- Science
- ICT
- Spanish
- Music
- Drama
- Art and design
- TASK (encompassing humanities)
- Physical education including swimming and dance
- PSHEE

In addition several cross curricular themes are taught across several subjects, for example 'first aid' in PE and science in Y6, and many ICT based topics throughout the school. These cross curricular links are recorded in the planning.

Setting: Girls are taught in sets for Maths, although a mastery approach is used with regard to maths planning and teaching. (in Year 5 and Year 6) The rest of the subjects are taught as from classes.

Subject policies

Each subject has a policy of its own, setting out how it meets the aims of the curriculum stated above, including detailed schemes of work. This takes account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils including those with an EHC plan and promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Online curriculum documents for parents are available on request.

There are other general whole school policies relating to the curriculum that include:

Teaching and Learning

Assessment

Able, Gifted and Talented

Learning Support (including SEN)

EAL

Trips and Visits

PSHEE (With particular regard to the protective characteristics under the Equality Act 2010)

SMSC

There are a range of extra-curricular activities that can be pursued in the activities break (mid-afternoon) before and after school, or, in the case of private lessons for drama or musical instruments, during lesson time on a carousel.. There is a separate list of extra-curricular activities published termly which include team sports, swimming, dance, choir and various orchestral groups.

Pupils with SEND, EAL and Able, Gifted and Talented are supported with specialist lessons if required and have opportunities to use their own language in play such as role play and with the use of dual language library books, thus strengthening the link between home and school.

Parents are invited in throughout the year to discuss progress and next steps.

Each subject has a policy of its own, including schemes of work, ICT and assessment opportunities and cross curricular links, which can be found in the document folder on the intranet.

A welcome evening for each year group is held in September, and welcome packs including all curriculum information for parents (and homework information) are given to all parents (new and existing).