

St John the Baptist V.A. School



Curriculum Rationale

About Our School



St John the Baptist VA School is located on the outskirts of Penymynydd village in the North East of Flintshire. Our school is not only very close to the border of the Cheshire plains but also close to the Clwydian Range, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The school recently celebrated 175 years since it first opened its doors to offer a church education to the local community. Over the passing years, the school has extended and modernised, so that the fabric of the building skilfully blends the new with unique historical architectural features. The majority of our pupils come from the growing villages of Penymynydd and Penyffordd or from within the Borderlands Mission Area. St John's prides itself on its close links to St John's Church with children from our school invited to take part in monthly Family Services. The Airbus factory at Broughton, alongside Chester business park, the health care sector are the major employers of our area.

Teachers, governors and parents all work together in partnership with one common aim: to do the best we can do for our children. We strive to create an environment where pupils are securely challenged, supported and feel confident. Each child is valued equally and we believe that each child should be motivated to reach his or her potential, in order to take their place as a good citizen from not only within the local community but also as a global citizen.



Our Vision

Working together with kindness, respect and encouragement to achieve our best, in a caring Christian school.

Phase 1: Christian Values and the Four Core Purposes







We have listened to our learners, parents, staff, governors and our local community. Collectively, we have chosen our Christian Values and linked each value to the Four Core Purposes and their associated learning and social behaviours.

Core Purposes	Christian Values	To work towards our vision, we will...
Ambitious, capable learners Ambitious Alex	Perseverance Courage	Be committed to keep going and not giving up. Overcome fear and face a challenge.
Ethical, informed citizens Ethical Ezra	Community Respect	Be stronger together. Show respect and care for the world around us.
Healthy, confident individuals Healthy Haven	Love Friendship	Grow and learn together because we know that God loves us. Share hopes and dreams, include others.
Enterprising, creative contributors Creative Charlie	Creativity Generosity	Be inquisitive, explore our wonderful world and utilise our talents. Take care of God's creation for future generations.

Four Core Purposes Behaviour for Learning

Whilst it may look different in each year group, 'behaviour for learning' develops the key skills children need to master to become successful learners. Our behaviours build on our growth mindset ethos and show children how they can become more confident learners, who always aspire to do their best.

			
Ambitious, capable learners Ambitious Alex	Ethical, informed citizens Ethical Ezra	Healthy, confident individuals Healthy Haven	Enterprising, creative contributors Creative Charlie
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am always ready to learn • I can focus on my task. • I can use my initiative • I have a growth mindset • I can listen well • I can act on advice and feedback • I practise things I find difficult • I know my strengths and weaknesses • I can think about how I learn. • I can communicate in Welsh and English. • I can explain what I'm learning about. • I can use number to solve problems. • I can use digital technologies to learn and communicate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can use what I know to help develop my views and opinions. • I can use my values to think and talk about worldwide issues. • I can be responsible and know about my rights and the rights of others. • I can take part in a democratic process e.g. I can vote in a class discussion. • I understand the affect my choices can have on myself and others. • I value and respect the opinions of others. • I can look after our planet. • I can learn through history to make better choices. • I take pride in my heritage and will continue to learn how to be a global citizen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can talk about my values and the school's Christian values and what is important to me. • I can talk about my emotions and ask for help. • I know my strengths and am comfortable with my weaknesses. • I understand the importance of diet and exercise. • I can ask for support when needed. • I can take part in different physical activities. • I can make good choices. • I can perform in front of others. • I am respectful to others • I can challenge myself. • I organise myself so that I'm ready to learn. • I can be a valued member of any team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I always try my best. • I can think creatively to solve a problem. • I can use my ideas to make different things. • I make the most of many opportunities that come my way. • I can "have a go" even if it means failing. • I can work as part of a team. • I can listen well to others. • I can express how I feel in a variety of ways. • I can work hard to help others.

Designing our Curriculum

Phase 1: Principles and Purpose – Determining the intent of our curriculum, defining what makes St John's a unique place to learn.

We began by establishing the curriculum principles that reflect St John the Baptist's Christian values, context, pedagogical approaches and needs.

We discussed and defined our curriculum principles, vision and intentions with all stakeholders.

Phase 2: Entitlement and Enhancement – Developing our learner offer

After clarifying our principles and purpose, we set out our learner offer. We considered our St John's non negotiables and how we intend to broaden our curriculum with educational visits, extracurricular activities and other curriculum enhancement experiences. We considered what learners will experience as they move through school and thought of ways to capture this.

Phase 3: Breadth, Balance and Pedagogy – Determining the content and delivery of our curriculum

From seeking the views of St John's stakeholders, we have determined the content of our curriculum. Over the passing years, since the launch of Professor Donaldson's Successful Futures report, staff at St John's have been exploring pedagogical principles. As a result of training and research based best practices, staff now have a range of engaging strategies to enhance pupil engagement.

Our curriculum will have a flexible approach which will allow staff and pupils to respond to national or world events.

Phase 4: Progression and Assessment – Planning for Progression

Learner progression along a continuum of learning from ages 3 to 16 is central to Curriculum for Wales. We will utilise various assessment strategies which will enable each individual learner to make progress at an appropriate pace, ensuring they are supported and challenged accordingly.

Phase 5: Review and Evaluate – Decide what works well and what areas need development

Now that we have established our curriculum an important step is to regularly review its impact on teaching and learning, making any adaptations or changes you need to improve it further. We will consider further professional learning opportunities for staff and continue to consult all stakeholders.

Phase 2: Our 'Non Negotiables'

Our non-negotiables have evolved from consultation with our pupils, staff, parents and governors. At St John the Baptist VA School we aim to enrich and broaden our curriculum through experiential learning opportunities within our locality and further afield. Our pupils are entitled to a wealth of non-negotiables which aim to enhance personal development.

Pupil voice - Adults within St John's have a whole-school commitment to listening to the views, wishes and experiences of all our children and young people. Pupils participate in learning walks, a breadth of committees and fundraising activities to name just a few. Pupil voice helps to shape their curriculum and how they can improve their work. Learners will have opportunities to influence their learning, in order to co-construct their curriculum. Teaching staff, as the experts, will coach the learning in an appropriate direction, considering the views and ideas of learners.

Our pride in our Welsh heritage and our sense of 'cynefin' - St John's School takes pride in our national and local heritage and provides many opportunities to celebrate, explore and discover the richness of our Welsh language and culture. St John's is working towards the Silver award for the Cymraeg Campus and annually participates in the Urdd, Eisteddfod competitions. Learners celebrate the Welsh language, culture and heritage throughout their work.

A caring, nurturing and safe environment for all - Our educational philosophy has inclusion at its core. We pride ourselves that our learners are accepting and caring to all those within our school community.

Christian values and our links with St John's Church and its community - Christian values underpin all that we do in St John's. Each day starts with an act of collective worship, offering our pupils the chance to explore and understand the values at the heart of our ethos. The key Christian festivals of harvest, Christmas and Easter are celebrated with our community within St John's Church. Once in the upper juniors, the Christian Values committee contribute to both our collective worship and our Ethos committee.

Health and well-being embeds the core of our curriculum - St John's provides a vast variety of physical and mental health opportunities which include; the development of our Forest Schools area on the school field, outdoor mindfulness, foundation phase daily mindful yoga, following the principles of the five ways to wellbeing, our charity work, outdoor educational visits and the opportunity to play a musical instrument. All of these enriching experiences accompanied by our Jigsaw PSE programme, support, foster and promote our children's health and well-being.

Music - St John's has excellent links with Theatr Clwyd Music Services and when our children are ready, they are offered the opportunity to learn a wide range of musical instruments. Children have opportunities to perform in front of audiences during celebratory services and in Urdd competitions. A few of our children have the opportunity to play in the Flintshire Orchestra.

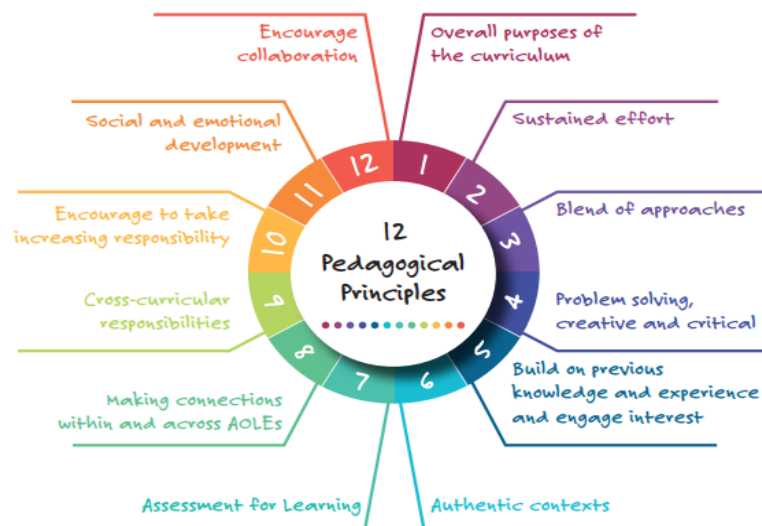


Phase 3: The Curriculum

In delivering effective teaching, teachers at St John's have co-operatively produced a high quality Teaching Charter based on the 12 Pedagogical Principles of the new curriculum.

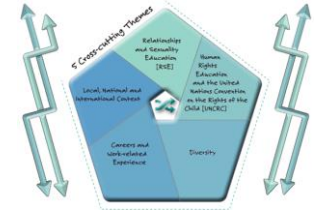
St John's teachers will:

- Build on pupils' prior knowledge, experience and be based on authentic experiences;
- Avoid overloading pupils' working memory by breaking down complex material or problems into smaller steps;
- Encourage the retention of learning by using repetition, practice and retrieval of critical knowledge and skills;
- Deliver a carefully-sequenced and connected curriculum which teaches essential concepts, knowledge, skills and principles;
 - Use powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, comparisons and demonstrations;
 - Be aware of common misconceptions and prepare strategies to counter them;
 - Plan effective lessons, making good use of modelling, explanation and scaffolds to support learning;
 - Encourage collaboration and taking increasing responsibility;
- Adapt teaching in a responsive way to support struggling and excelling learning while maintaining high expectations for all;
 - Provide pupils with tools and strategies to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning.



Whole School Topics - 2023 - 2024

At St John's the curriculum is delivered over a two year period, following the children's two year experience of their classroom before they move onto their next class or high school.



	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Autumn 1	All About Me	All About Me	Dyma fi	Dyma fi
Autumn 2	Around the World	Around the World	Celebrations	Celebrations
Spring 1	Heroes in our Community	Heroes in our Community	Taith yr Iath	Wonderful Wales
Spring 2	Heroes in our Community & Rhyme Challenge	Heroes in our Community	Cymru Cwl	Cymru Cwl
Summer 1	Animal Kingdom	Animal Kingdom	Mythical Worlds	World War 2
Summer 2	Animal Kingdom	Animal Kingdom	Mythical Worlds	World War 2

	Health & Wellbeing	Religion, Values and Ethics (R.V.E)
Autumn 1	Being Me in my World	Harvest
Autumn 2	Celebrating Difference	Celebrations Christmas
Spring 1	Dreams & Goals	Multifaith – Places of Worship
Spring 2	Healthy Me	Easter
Summer 1	Relationships	Moving On
Summer 2	Changing Me	Moving On

Planning our curriculum

At St. John's each unit of work will start with an engaging 'hook' that will captivate our pupils with their learning. Teachers will select at least one of the following 'hooks':



Focus weeks



Big questions



"Mantle of the Expert"

An educational approach that uses imaginary contexts to generate purposeful and engaging activities for learning.



Stories



World events



"Wow" days

Phase 3: Our Digital Vision

St. John the Baptist school recognises the importance of Digital technologies and the positive impact it can have on a child's education. As a school, we promote the use of technology and understand the importance of children becoming confident and having the ability to develop their ICT skills. It's important to recognise that technology is always changing and that our learners are kept up to date with these technologies.

St John's Digital Vision

Capable | To give learners opportunities to learn a wide range of digital skills across a range of digital devices.

Informed | Promoting learners to be responsible and respectful online citizens.

Confident | To promote learners to use their digital skills to collaborate and overcome challenges.

Creative | Promoting learners to use digital tools and technologies to explore new ways of displaying their work.

Our aims are:

- To embed ICT and Digital skills across the curriculum to ensure that learners can use their skills to enhance their learning.
- To allow learners to become competent and confident in their digital learning and to take part in digital learning experiences.
 - To promote the use of different digital technologies and allow them to use new emerging technologies.
- For all staff to be able to improve their digital skills and provide opportunities for digital professional learning.
 - Allow learners and staff to collaborate using digital technologies.
 - To promote staff to take shared responsibility for online safety and ICT.
- For learners and staff to use ICT and their digital skills to promote links with parents and the local/wider community.

Phase 4: Progression and Assessment

Learner progression along a continuum of learning from ages 3 to 16 is central to Curriculum for Wales. We will utilise various assessment strategies, which will enable each individual learner to make progress at an appropriate pace, ensuring they are supported and challenged accordingly. Initially we will be mainly using Taith360 as an assessment and tracking tool.

The Purpose of assessment

We utilise various assessment strategies as an overarching purpose within the curriculum to support every learner to make progress.

In addition to this, assessment is a fundamental role in ensuring each individual learner is supported and challenged accordingly and we use the strategies to contribute to developing a holistic picture of the learner – their strengths, the ways in which they learn, and their areas for development – in order to inform next steps in learning and teaching.

Our assessments support individual learner progression on an ongoing, day-to-day basis (Assessment for Learning, AFL); identifying, capturing and reflecting on individual learner progress over time; and understanding group progress in order to reflect on practice.

We also monitor each learner's well-being and cognitive development (CAT4). These assessments are used to formulate an accurate snapshot which provide attainment, progress and well-being targets.

Communicating and engaging with parents/carers

We communicate effectively with parents/carers on an ongoing basis to foster positive relationships in order to engage them in purposeful and meaningful dialogue. When undertaken well, this can help aid learner progression by helping parents/carers to understand how they can support learning within and outside the school environment.

We have developed and implemented processes which support effective two-way communication and engagement with parents/carers. When developing these processes, consideration has been given to using a wide variety of different communication means, e.g. face-to-face, digital through SeeSaw and email via Parentmail.

Information on any support, interventions or additional needs required for the learner's development is shared with parents and carers.

