

The Curriculum at West Ashtead

At West Ashtead Primary School, we are committed to providing a rich and creative curriculum that prepares our pupils to be lifelong independent learners. Our curriculum encompasses the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage in Reception and the National Curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Our youngest children have direct teaching of phonics, reading, writing and maths which is balanced with access to a high quality independent learning environment. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. We provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Key Stages 1 and 2

Our West Ashtead curriculum is designed to develop enjoyment and commitment to learning. Our curriculum is underpinned by our strong belief in developing independent and co-operative learners who have a desire to enquire and find out for themselves.

Alongside equipping children with the essential skills of English and Maths, our curriculum is planned to provide rich content and varied contexts, the development and application of skills, knowledge and understanding and most importantly of all the opportunity to think critically, to solve problems, to be creative, innovative and enterprising.

Our curriculum is broad and balanced. Subjects are integrated when appropriate to make the learning relevant and coherent. Cross-curricular links are planned for without losing focus of discrete knowledge and skills. When learning is first-hand, stimulating, memorable and enjoyable, children are more likely to engage and achieve. Trips are planned for each class every term as well as residential in Year 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Inclusion

We plan for the learning in each year to be continuous and progressive, building on prior knowledge and ensuring that progress can be made by every child. This may mean an individualised or adapted curriculum for some children. As a result of rigorous assessment, we identify when a child may benefit from a tailored intervention to support them and move them on in their learning. Teachers respond to needs and overcome potential barriers for individuals and groups of children.

Subject Aims

English

We aim to develop children's ability to communicate appropriately and effectively whilst encouraging an enjoyment and appreciation of language and literature. We encourage children to read enthusiastically and with increasing fluency, accuracy and understanding across a range of genres. Books are a central part of our whole curriculum and children have regular access to our school library. Our early readers choose books which are closely linked to their phonic development. We aim to develop an enjoyment in writing for a range of purposes. Children are given time to rehearse their ideas orally before writing, using drama and role play and effective stimuli including quality texts and first hand experiences. Time is allocated to improving the crafting of individual sentences, the selection of words and the accuracy and variety of punctuation.

Spoken Language

Teaching of spoken language encourages all children to be confident, articulate, fluent speakers who can listen attentively and respond appropriately. Children learn to widen their use and choice of vocabulary and modify their speaking according to the audience and situation.

Phonics and Spelling

We follow the Jolly Phonics scheme which is designed to be fast paced and interactive. We track children's progress closely and have interventions in place as appropriate. When phonics learning is secure the children move to more formal spelling rules and conventions. Discrete spelling sessions are taught regularly following the No Nonsense Spelling and Grammar scheme which focuses on being exploratory and investigative with high levels of child engagement and discussion.

Mathematics

Mathematics is taught using the mastery approach, which is underpinned by the belief that all children can succeed. Alongside procedural fluency, children's conceptual understanding is developed by allowing time for them to explore and discover for themselves the structure and connections between mathematical ideas. Children are encouraged to articulate their findings, using mathematical vocabulary, in a supportive environment of enquiry. This ensures children experience deep learning, which can be sustained over time and applied to solving practical problems. Above all, mathematics is viewed as a creative subject, where children are active and inquisitive learners, taking ownership of their own progress.

Religious Education

RE is taught from the Surrey Agreed Syllabus and lessons offer a chance to learn about the beliefs and practices in six different world religions and belief systems. Children investigate the moral and ethical issues raised in popular religious stories, teachings and practices. At the same time, children develop their listening and discussion skills and as a result, we nurture tolerance and understanding of different faiths and views. Parents may withdraw their child from any aspects of this curriculum according to Government guidelines.

Computing

At West Ashted we encourage our children to be active learners who enjoy using a wide range of technology to further their learning.

From KS1 upwards the children complete units involving programming using software such as Light Bot, Roamer Floor Turtles, 2 Simple, Scratch, Kodu, Lego We-Do, Sketch-up and Flowol as well as units taken from the Code-It and Hour of Code websites. The importance of computational thinking – which involves logic and planning, writing algorithms, de-bugging and evaluating is stressed.

There is also a focus on how digital systems work – for example exploring what the World Wide Web and the internet are, and how they work and also how search engines such as Google work. Our children use different input and output devices to control systems. A further strand of lessons enables children to develop as digitally literate technology users who can express themselves creatively and develop their ideas through information and communication technology. They have the opportunity to complete units involving word processing, presenting information, data management, and creation and manipulation of images and sound using a variety of software.

With 4 class sets of Wi-Fi connected laptops available for the children's use, they are also able to use technology to further their learning across the whole curriculum, for example researching history topics, exploring maps or using interactive maths games.

We understand that it is essential to develop the children as responsible digital citizens. This means we regularly address strategies for using technology safely and in ways that enhance creativity and social connections but do not compromise their emotional well-being.

Science

We aim to provide opportunities for children to learn more about the world around them through practical and challenging activities. Experiments are linked to the real world, and provide opportunities for children to extend their own thinking. Lessons embed important life skills, such as learning from mistakes, looking for patterns and evaluating. Children take increased responsibility for planning and executing experiments, as they move through the school. Across the school, children follow the content of the National Curriculum for England, with some additional science learning which our school sees as important for our children in order for our wider class topics to be fully developed.

At West Ashted we are lucky to have a range of different habitats in our school grounds which the children can explore.

History

Children study topics ranging from Ancient Egypt through to World War 2 with a particular focus on British history. History is taught through a skills-based approach. Through creative and engaging lessons, the children explore different historical interpretations and develop their understanding of key historical events and the different periods of History. During History lessons, the children are encouraged to develop these skills and pursue their own questions through historical enquiry. Where possible, the children visit a range of places to help them develop their understanding further and gain the hands on experience that creates enjoyment for the subject and provides a greater depth to their learning.

Geography

In geography we focus on building children's location and place knowledge, understanding human and physical patterns and using geographical skills during fieldwork. The skills taught in Early Years are the foundation blocks which each child builds on as they progress through the school, giving them greater confidence and providing them with a more secure understanding of the world we live in. The skills taught in KS2 are put to the test during residential and day trips where the children can often see the physical elements taught in the classroom for themselves, giving them greater depth to their learning.

Art and Design

We believe that children should be inspired and encouraged to think of themselves as artists in order to develop as far possible their understanding of the practical and conceptual aspects of art, craft and design. We believe that a fully rounded art, craft and design curriculum is founded on personal expression, cultural understanding, risk-taking, creative development and practical skills. Exposure to a broad range of artists and art-movements from different periods and cultures is an essential part of the children's art education, as is the opportunity to

think critically and reflect on these areas and their own work. We believe that children should leave West Ashtead having enjoyed and progressed in their learning to the extent that they have the confidence and creativity to contribute to the world of art, craft and design in their future education and beyond.

Design Technology

Our Design and Technology curriculum gives children the opportunity develop their problem solving skills in an investigative context, allowing them the freedom and creativity to follow their own lines of enquiry and build upon taught skills. The children learn about how to design and make functional and appealing products for themselves and others from a given brief, giving purpose and context to their learning. They work with tools, equipment, materials and components to make quality products. Following designing and making, children then identify strengths and weaknesses of their own products and improve them.

Physical Education

Children receive 2 hours of P.E. per week. Children develop the skills and strategies to play football, basketball, cricket, netball, hockey, rounders, tag-rugby, basketball, tennis and athletics. Children learn how to prepare their bodies for exercise and evaluate their performance. Our gymnasium is purpose-built, spacious and well-equipped for activities such as gymnastics and movement. There are many sports clubs and teams.

French

French is taught from Year 1 to Year 6 by specialist subject teachers. The emphasis is on communication and the practical uses of language. It is taught using a variety of different techniques including games, songs, puppets, drama and role-play. As children progress through the school there is a greater emphasis on grammar and written language to prepare them for secondary school.

Music

West Ashtead believes that music should be fun and accessible to all. It is taught throughout the school by a music specialist who encourages a passion for music and helps pupils develop the skills required to perform and compose. Children have the opportunity to join choirs, a jazz band and recorder groups and lessons from visiting peripatetic teachers are available for most instruments. Concerts and musicals showcase the children's talent on a termly basis.

Personal, Social and Health Education

PSHE is an important part of our school curriculum and the daily life of the school. Through PSHE we equip the children with a toolkit to manage their emotions, build and sustain relationships, keep themselves healthy and safe and to live responsibly. Children are taught in a range of different ways including practical activities and games, discussions, researching topics for themselves, videos and presentations. They are encouraged to display our school values of responsibility, resilience and respect at all times.