

THE CURRICULUM AT SIR ROBERT GEFFERY'S SCHOOL

(As shared with Stakeholders)

We have some different approaches to development of learning and an exciting curriculum. Sir Robert Geffery's School is always a very busy but exciting and thriving learning community. Not everybody will know about how things are planned and how what we offer may be different. Over the next few weeks I am going to include in the newsletter information for you. It will be later added to our website and then as we review you will have a better understanding.

Personally I am really pleased that OFSTED and other agencies are keen again to see a broad and balanced curriculum, as we have always made sure that our children have enjoyed a very creative curriculum that also develops knowledge and learning skills. When many schools narrowed their focus and children spent the majority of their day on English and Maths and learned other subjects in this way we continued to deliver a creative curriculum linked to topics and taught by subject experts. The afternoons therefore could just continue. Trips and visits were extended, and not reduced, and so much exciting learning happened in different ways.

Our Intentions were, and remain, that children would leave Sir Robert Geffery's with good basic skills in English and Maths but also a thirst for learning and an ability to know themselves as learners and also how to find out more.

How our Curriculum is Planned

Children in Year 1 and 2 have the same termly or half termly topic and aspects of English and Maths and the foundation subjects link to make the learning purposeful. Our regular whole school theme weeks enhance this alongside the numerous visits and visitors that provide all with first hand experiences, both on and off the school site.

Topics in the KS 1 two year programme start with a key question and the children also participate at the planning stage discussing what they would like to learn. Topics over the years have been adjusted to fit in with local and national events, for example WW1 was a new topic in October 2018 in line with the centenary of the war. In KS 2 there is a four year rolling programme and once again it has been adapted to meet local and national opportunities.

We actively teach children to be involved in their learning and this is developed through the school. One consistent thread is the embedded learning reflections and dialogue between pupils and teachers in the form of self- assessment. This has been well used since 2005 and helps pupils to become really involved in their own learning. Peer assessment is also used regularly in all subjects.

The school has been involved in the development of thinking skills and learning skills for many years. All children take part in learning forums and school evaluation is supported in these sessions. During these sessions children have developed and

reviewed learning charters, learned about 'Building Learning Power' and share ideas with children in their own key stage.

In every lesson the children are introduced to a learning question and these include a Bloom's Verb and a Building Learning Power skill.

Subject specialism teaching in KS2 results in children being taught by all four teachers and so a common topic approach means that the skills developed are planned carefully but with common language and outcomes. Writing in the morning links with this.

To make sure that teachers are not de-skilled in teaching all areas and to give children a variety of learning we also have regular theme weeks:

Theme Weeks Held Annually

Autumn 1	Humanities and Citizenship
Autumn 2	DT resulting in Christmas Bazaar where items are made by children and sold as a business enterprise
Spring 1	Science Week
Spring 2	RE Week
Summer 1	Health Safety and Fitness
Summer 2	The Arts Outdoor Learning

Unique Aspects of our Curriculum

Outdoor Learning

With our extensive grounds that include a farm, forest school areas and field - every child has an hour a week session developing outdoor learning skills in the afternoon. We use our minibus to build in off- site learning regularly, The visits list for 2018-2019 lists the trips undertaken and show such a wide range - this can be seen on the website.

Music

We are fortunate to be able to offer a wealth of musical opportunities. At present Mr Hambly, who trained with us through the School Direct Programme, is our coordinator and now works part time delivering music in school. As an ex-Marine Bandsman his passion has resulted in him writing a school anthem and other songs for special occasions, i.e. The Opening Games Song for the Cornwall Youth Games.

Children in Year 4 have a weekly brass lesson using the school's set of instruments. We also have a class set of ukuleles and drums so that class sessions can be held. Singing is strong and every child participates in a Christmas Musical at Christmas and we have a second play for Year 6 in the summer term due to the talent and commitment of our staff.

We also have a girls' choir, a boys' choir and a school orchestra.

Peripatetic lessons are held weekly in drumming, violin, brass, piano, singing, clarinet, flute, saxophone and guitar.

Scholarship places are available for music lessons and funding is available for those who are eligible because of low incomes.

Music is a school priority and a real strength of the school

ICT

We pride ourselves in the quality of the hardware we have that is regularly updated and constantly used.

We are fortunate to have many laptops, computers and Ipads and will be having chrome books in the near future. All rooms have a Clevertouch board and can access the hardware easily. The school opens the ICT suite at 8am every day where school staff support learning and homework. It is also staffed daily till 4.30 where a home learning club operates. At lunchtime, once again, the suite is also open and again support for learning is given.

Knowing that children can be highly engaged using and enjoying ICT based activities, the governors have supported their access to educational sites outside the school day as well as within. We currently use:

Mymaths

Education City

Mathletics

Spellodrome

Tables Rockstar

Accelerated Reader

Purple Mash with 2Simple Software

During the past two years, we have taken up the opportunity for teachers and pupils to participate in Apple Store workshops and now have 10 spheroballs that are used for programming.

ICT is also an enrichment session on a Friday afternoon where children get another additional opportunity to develop their skills.

Art

The school has a kiln and many art resources for the children to use. The talent of the staff members who work with the children ensures the skills are taught and developed before a final product is created. For example a Poppy Wave can be seen displayed in the Bible garden of the school. Canvases line the walls of the corridors and the art related to the topic of the term is well displayed for all to see.

The displays in the classrooms are vibrant and enhance our environment and from the time you enter the school building, the high quality of display reflects learning of our pupils.

PE

PE has always been a strength of the school as we have always thought that a healthy body aids a healthy mind.

We have held an Active Mark Gold since 2004 and have not looked back since as we have now become a Platinum Sports School Games Awarded School

These are not just badges because the PE curriculum inside and outside school hours is phenomenal.

We offer extra-curricular activities in:

Because all staff run an activity, and did before PE funding was available, we have been able to include additional support from outside coaches to extend sport further. In 2018-2019 we have had:

Plymouth Raiders for basketball
St Mellion Academy for tri-golf
Plymouth Albion for tag rugby
Zero Gravity for Cheerleading and Gymnastics

and the take up is always high.

Sir Robert Geffery's Residential Experiences

We feel that these are really important and have developed many opportunities for the children from the time the move into year 3 until they leave in year 6.

Learning to be independent and sleep away from home is really important and by going with adults they know and trust and supported by friends who they are with at school is a good first step. We know many children may have had sleepovers and stayed with family but every year we do have children who have not done this being supported by adults and those who have.

Just trying different food, organising clothes and washing can be an interesting challenge to some.

Four years ago in line with our rolling programme we introduced a one night two day experience and have tried to make sure this is great value for money and affordable for all. We always try to get grants or funding so all children can access one way or another.

So far in relation to topics two days and one night:

2014 Dartmoor at Pixie Holt

2015 Anglo Saxons- Escot Park

2016 Ancient Greeks- we went to Eden Project

2017 Romans we went to Bath and Explore at Bristol

2018 Dartmoor with Spirit of Adventure at Spaugh Bridge

In year 5 the children have been attending a week at Barton Hall.

We usually go early in the season to benefit from a better price. Initially they offered science and we did both now it is outdoor education –we choose a range of activities to encourage risk taking, activities to promote team building skills and a range of experiences that they have not had previously. We are currently reviewing this in line with our outdoor curriculum development that has been embedded as we have a clear idea of the leadership and team building, challenge and resilience skills we want to make sure are instilled in all who leave Sir Robert Geffery's.

In year 6 the children have been going for a week to London for over fifty years.

The London experience is really important to us because they are hosted by The Ironmongers for a night as they have a banquet and a tour of the Ironmongers Hall. The opportunity to learn and see original pictures of Sir Robert Geffery's, and spend time with our trustees who visit us so frequently. As a school with such a history this is so important and unique. The children are proud of their school and the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers who have been care takers for 300 years really enjoy this time. The Master of the Company along with governors attends the evening and it is always a highlight of the week. A giant sleepover for the children occurs afterwards-

not many children get to sleep in Dumbledore's Office (that is where Harry Potter was filmed)

The rest of the week the children stay at Lee Valley at an YHA

Activities in the week certainly mean they return on Friday having had a real cultural experience including

A visit and workshop at The House at Parliament where they usually met our MP

A visit to The Natural History Museum

Visit to London Museum –opposite Ironmonger's Hall

Evening Song at St Paul's Cathedral usually sitting near the choristers

A River Cruise down the Thames

A visit to either The Tower of London or Windsor Castle

A trip to see a West End Show these have included: Matilda, War Horse, Shrek, Joseph, Lion King Etc.

A day at water sports where they kayak, canoe and sail -this means that they do not have to travel on one day back into London before their journey home

On the way back we often stop at Montacute House for a tour and art workshops

Staff and children are then ready for their sleep!

Finally.....

We were offered the opportunity after many years of trying to join Devon School and Plymouth Schools with a Junior Ten Tor Team. Selecting only eight was always difficult and we tried to make sure that all children had opportunities for things over the year. We realised for some they needed support to develop confidence and others had experienced things like this previously. From 2018 we will have our JJT team and we have also arranged that we can offer the same experience through The Spirit of Discovery.

However, I am personally indebted to our staff team who willingly take responsibility for them going and give up their evenings free. In September with a different class going each night this can mean over 30 staff being involved during the course of the week. The risk assessments, consent letters, pre-visits budgeting etc. for this many experiences do take time and our EVC coordinator works exceptionally hard. We are fortunate that we are supported by our community and also organisations where grants are available to make it happen

All this work is worth it because our children really benefit greatly from the learning out of the classroom, and I know the life skills learned and the memories gained help them through secondary school and beyond.