



# Merrydale Infant School Curriculum Policy

Chair's signature ... *Mrs Elizabeth Surtees*

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At Merrydale Infants we provide a curriculum that motivates and engages pupils. We help children develop independence and creativity while they explore new ideas and concepts and have fun! We are proud of the inclusive nature of our school, and ensure that all pupils are given opportunities that are appropriate and tailored to meet their individual learning needs.

### **National requirements**

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is provided for all pupils aged three to the end of their reception (F2) year. In Years One and Two, the Key Stage One National Curriculum is covered.

### **Curriculum approach**

Learning is skills based so that our children are equipped with all they need to become independent and inquisitive learners. We provide carefully planned opportunities for children to problem solve and explore their own investigations. We also encourage children to work collaboratively so that they learn the important skills involved in teamwork.

## **Learning in the Foundation Stage**

At Merrydale Infant School, Nursery (F1) and Reception (F2) classes follow the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) through the adoption of the Birth

to 5 document . <https://www.birthto5matters.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Birthto5Matters-download.pdf>

The purpose of the document includes reaffirming core principles which recognise:

- the child at the centre of practice
- the child's connections within family, communities, cultures and the natural world
- the need to consider the whole child: physical, social and emotional wellbeing, health, and learning
- the child's rights as members of society under the United Nations Convention on

the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), including:

- o Non-discrimination (article 2)
- o Best interest of the child (article 3)
- o Goals of education (article 29)
- o Right to be heard (article 12)
- o Right to play (article 31)
- o Right to freedom of expression (article 13)
- o Right to freedom of thought, belief and religion (article 14)
- o Right for children with a disability to live a full and decent life (article 23)
- o Right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family (article 30)
- the sector's responsibilities under the United Nations Sustainability Goals and UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development
- the statutory requirements of the SEND Code of Practice.

#### What will children do during a Nursery or Reception class session?

Our children take part in a wide range of activities, both indoors and outdoors. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. At Merrydale we strongly believe that children in the Foundation Stage learn best through first-hand experience and structured play activities. To our children, play is their "work" and we value it as such. Play is essential for children's

development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

### Free Flow and the Outside Classroom

Not only do our children have access to their own classroom, for most of the day they will also have access to the outside classroom which the Nursery and Reception share. For much of the day our children will be able to choose where they would like their learning to take place. However, we do encourage everyone to spend some time outside each day, as there are important skills that can only be learnt outside – such as running, riding our wheeled toys and using their big voices.

## Learning in Key Stage 1

### Key Stage 1 Curriculum

#### Literacy

All literacy work aims to develop speaking and listening skills that help children to become effective communicators verbally and in writing. We recognise that oracy is the foundation for success in literacy, particularly at our school, where many pupils have English as an additional language. Our literacy curriculum is based on good quality texts, so that children develop a love of books and can use what they read to help them write for themselves. Children study carefully chosen key texts that link to topic work so that learning is as connected as possible. Each text is used as a starting point for reading activities and writing tasks. Wherever possible, children are asked to write for real purposes. Oracy, reading and writing skills are used to support the learning experiences that children have in every curriculum area.

#### Mathematics

In Maths our aim is to equip children to deal with the challenges they will meet in everyday life. As well as learning to count and to calculate, children also gain practical skills such as weighing, measuring, telling the time and using money. We encourage them to apply their skills and knowledge through problem solving activities and by using their Mathematics in other areas of the curriculum. Children learn to think logically and to work methodically.

The Mathematics curriculum is based on key objectives taken from the new National Curriculum, delivered through a maths scheme called White Rose.

### Topic work

Merrydale Infant School has designed a curriculum based on the interests and needs of our pupils. The curriculum is built around the concept of greater learner involvement in their work.

Our curriculum encourages deep thinking and supports learners in their work through the use of carefully differentiated questions. Half termly topics are designed to help children link their understanding in different curriculum areas so that their thoughts and experiences are as cohesive as possible.

Our topic learning can be practical, expressive, creative, investigative and knowledge rich, whilst enabling children to work collaboratively or individually. Topics can last as little as three weeks or as many as six weeks.

Topic work covers:

- Art and design
- Geography (supported by the Oddizzi scheme)
- History
- Science

Merrydale Infants now has a number of schemes that ensure our curriculum is sequenced and progressive in other subject areas.

We believe that whilst schemes provide coverage and progression, and help less confident teachers to develop their skills and confidence with subjects, they should not be used exclusively. We enhance and enrich the basic provision that our schemes give to ensure the children have a rich curriculum experience.

*Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach. Careful checks provide them with information about the learning of pupils. For example, regular use of small whiteboards allows many teachers to check the understanding of skills quickly and adjust teaching accordingly. Good planning helps pupils to receive strong support from teaching assistants, who often provide strong support for small groups. This enables those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress. Ofsted, Feb 2017*

## Physical Education

At Merrydale Infant School, we believe that high-quality physical education is a physical and cultural entitlement for all children. This begins in Foundation where children are introduced to the fundamental skills, knowledge and vocabulary of PE in the prime area of physical development.

As children progress into Key Stage 1, they follow the national curriculum. We aim to ensure that all pupils:

- become competent to excel in a variety of physical activities.
- stay physically active for sustained periods of time.
- engage in competitive sports and activities.
- lead healthy, active lives.

In addition to this, we also teach the positive behaviour and attitudes that enable our pupils to develop socially and emotionally. This includes promoting values such as teamwork, respect, determination, self-belief, passion and honesty which are key to so many subjects but are highly evident in high-quality PE.

In Foundation Stage, we follow the Birth to 5 matters guidance which provides the framework for our physical development curriculum. A guide to how PE is taught in the early years can be found in the 'curriculum' section of our website.

At Key Stage 1 the national curriculum states that children should:

- develop fundamental movement skills.
- access a broad range of opportunities to develop agility, balance and coordination.
- become increasingly competent and confident in a range of activities.
- engage in competitive and cooperative physical activities (e.g. sports) both individually, against others and as a team.
- be provided with challenges within physical activities.

In order to provide a sequenced curriculum that promotes the development and mastery of these objectives, we have adopted the Real PE scheme of work. This enables children to learn fundamental PE skills in a highly visual and age-appropriate way. It also aims to motivate all children to enjoy PE by promoting positive learning behaviours and self-esteem. Teachers may also use other resources and provide opportunities from specialist coaches to teach more specific skills in the areas of sport, dance and games. This year we have welcomed coaches in gymnastics and balanceability (bike-riding) and look forward to meeting a cricket coach later in the year.

### **After-School Opportunities**

Children also have the opportunity to participate in after-school clubs. Presently there is a basketball club and a multi-sports club where children can boost their skills or try activities they may not have attempted before. These include: football, dodge ball, cricket and other team games. We continue to expand the opportunities on offer and consult the children on their preferences.

### **Computing**

Our computing curriculum is drawn from 'The Switch on Computing Scheme' for KS1 from Rising Stars. For the Foundation Stage we teach the children skills to prepare them for the computing curriculum. Our children are taught Digital Literacy, Computer Science, Active participation in a digital world and how to be safe using the internet (e-safety). Computing at our school is cross curricular and links are made with other subjects.

### **RE**

Leicesters' agreed syllabus for Religious Education is followed. Our school community represents a diverse range of faiths and cultures and our curriculum values and celebrates these. We aim to help our pupils become sensitive individuals, who see differences between themselves and others in positive and enlightening way.

### **PSHE**

We follow the Jigsaw approach to PSHE, tailoring it to the needs of our children. Each half term covers a block of work such as Being Me and Dreams and Goals. The whole school works on the same PSHE theme each half term.

PHSE is taught once a week in a dedicated lesson.

The Relationships, Health and Sex Education curriculum has been introduced through the "Changing Me" Jigsaw unit of work that is delivered in the summer term.

### **Music**

Our music curriculum is supported by the Charanga scheme. The children also enjoy regular opportunities for singing, playing and performing.

## Design Technology

Merrydale has adopted the Plan B scheme of work as its DT curriculum. The school has a kitchen where children enjoy cooking and lessons that promote healthy eating.

## Curriculum enrichment and enhancement

Our National Curriculum coverage gives pupils everything that we are responsible for providing, but at Merrydale we believe that our pupils deserve to have their learning experiences in the classroom enriched wherever possible. To achieve this, children have many opportunities to extend learning outside of school by visiting other places. We invite visitors into school to give our children opportunities to ask questions and listen to experts! Clubs, competitions and local events are all used to provide additional activities for pupils to help them extend and apply their learning.