



CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

This Policy applies to all year groups at Thomas's Schools, including the EYFS.

Thomas's operates as a group of schools with a similar ethos and values. However in some areas, it is appropriate for each school to adopt discrete procedures, acknowledging the individual identity of each school and its specific personnel and systems. These supplementary procedures can be found by clicking the name of the relevant school under the contents list of this Policy.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with Thomas's Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy, EAL Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, EYFS Policy, Most Able Policy, Outdoors Policy, PSHE Policy, RSE Policy, SEND Policy, SMSC Policy, Wellbeing Policy.

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SCHOOL SUPPLEMENTS

[Thomas's Battersea Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy Supplement](#)

[Thomas's Clapham Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy Supplement](#)

[Thomas's Fulham Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy Supplement](#)

[Thomas's Kensington Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy Supplement](#)

1. INTRODUCTION

Thomas's provides a forward-thinking, outward-looking education, based on a strong set of values. Opportunities ensure deep learning and breadth of experience as well as educational success so that every pupil in our care aspires to fulfil his or her potential.

2. AIMS

Each of the Thomas's Schools applies the aims and principles of our curriculum policy to their own specific context and the age range of that school. Throughout the schools' group we undertake to:

- have high expectations of the children and ourselves
- raise levels of attainment for all pupils, enabling them to achieve their personal best
- develop a growth mindset and a positive attitude to new challenges
- develop confident, creative and curious learners who are able to make informed choices
- foster a love of deep learning and develop skills of independent enquiry
- nurture emotional intelligence
- facilitate considerate and positive relationships between all members of the school community
- ensure equal opportunities in relation to gender, race, class, special needs, and belief
- value and respect all cultures
- provide a rich, dynamic, rewarding and enjoyable learning environment
- uphold the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- ensure that staff are aware that the school precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school
- promote a thoughtful attitude towards the local and wider environment and a sense of social responsibility
- prepare pupils for entry to senior schools suited to their abilities and character
- equip pupils with the skills, knowledge and understanding to approach their next stage and to support their future lives, beyond education

3. PRINCIPLES

We believe in a broad, enquiry mindset curriculum which will equip today's pupils to become the adults of tomorrow.

- Links between areas of learning and to real-life contexts are fostered
- Our provision is four-dimensional, knowledge-engaged and skills led:
 - Knowledge - content taught is relevant, contemporary and engaging. Instead of simply imparting knowledge, our teachers encourage manipulation and synthesis, so that acquired knowledge can be applied to new situations
 - Key Skills - our learners develop a breadth of scholastic and societal skills. Thinking and questioning skills are highly valued. Societal skills are centred on the vital 4Cs: creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking
 - Character - our curriculum is underpinned by a strong set of values, which inspire learners to develop core character traits, such as resilience, along with key capabilities, including broad questioning and deep thinking. We encourage the belief that identifying and learning from mistakes is crucial
 - Meta-learning - through dynamic and captivating teaching and learning we encourage the ability to reflect and adapt and instil in our pupils a clear understanding of how they learn
- We place a strong emphasis on specialist taught areas of learning, often from the earliest years including Art, Dance, Drama, Computing, MFL & Classics, Music and PE & Sport

- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is given strong emphasis and underpins the aims and the delivery of the curriculum
- Within the contexts of personal growth and academic success, we prepare our pupils thoroughly for their next educational step be it entry to senior school at Year 7 or Year 9 or indeed to Thomas's Senior School
- We believe in the benefits of learning beyond the classroom and recognise that outdoor education offers pupils unique opportunities and experiences that cannot be taught within the classroom environment, therefore it is integral to our curriculum at all stages

4. CURRICULUM AREAS OF LEARNING

4.1 English

Literacy skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening are fundamental to the educational, social and personal progress of our pupils and are taught explicitly and systematically. Learning is pupil-centred, thought-provoking and purposeful.

We teach reading and spelling through a systematic approach using synthetic phonics, followed by grammar and punctuation, to encourage fluent, accurate and willing writers. We foster a love of reading and storytelling, whilst developing a lifelong appreciation of the power and beauty of language.

4.2 Mathematics

Our teaching of Mathematics builds a secure foundation of understanding, an ability to apply and reason mathematically and a sense of excitement and curiosity about the subject, which develops our pupils' ability to tackle complex problems. Every opportunity is taken to demonstrate cross-curricular and real world links with other subjects. Our aim is to ensure that children become confident, creative users and communicators of Mathematics.

4.3 Science

Children naturally have many questions and great excitement, both about the world they live in and beyond it. We believe that investigations are the driving force behind the teaching and learning of Science. Pupils develop skills of hypothesising, planning, designing, observing, recording, classifying, grouping and drawing conclusions from evidence. In addition, they learn scientific enquiry skills to help pose and answer open-ended questions.

4.4 Understanding the World

We develop our pupils' understanding of the world by building historical, geographical, religious and philosophical knowledge and skills. These areas of learning are typically interlinked and form the basis of much of our Enquiry Mindset curriculum.

Geography – pupils learn to explore landscapes, people, places and the environment as well as the interaction between them, in order to gain understanding from a local to a global scale.

History – learning focuses on social, political, economic and cultural aspects so that our pupils understand how the past has shaped the present and so that they grow as informed, global citizens.

Religious Education & Philosophy – pupils explore the beliefs and practices of the world's

religions and philosophies and learn to link these with their own identity, experiences and reactions. In addition, thought-provoking discussions address philosophical, moral and spiritual questions.

4.5 Creating and Inventing

Art, Design and Computing provide rich opportunities for creativity and invention. In addition, teachers help pupils to develop strong connections between these and other subjects, especially Science and Mathematics (STEAM).

Art and Design – pupils investigate a broad range of materials, techniques and artists as well as the use of technology. Design focuses on making things and on solving problems in the process. Pupils learn to take risks whilst becoming resourceful, innovative and enterprising.

Computing – pupils learn how to interact with technology and how to manipulate the unfamiliar. Our curriculum includes computer science, including programming and coding, and using technological hardware such as 3D printers and drones. Pupils of all ages are taught strategies for keeping safe when using technology in and out of school.

4.6 Language and Culture

Inherently beneficial, languages also play a significant role in teaching children to understand the cultures of countries other than their own. In addition to teaching language skills, we prepare children for a world of increasing globalisation by equipping them with an understanding of global compassion, empathy and interest. Learning languages also helps pupils to develop their skills of creative problem solving and lateral thinking.

In the Lower School, pupils have Language and Culture lessons, in which they encounter a range of different languages. Older pupils receive specific language lessons focusing on French and/or Spanish as well as Classics.

4.7 Performing Arts

The performing arts are deeply rooted in our ethos.

Drama offers every child the opportunity to develop their communicative, creative and collaborative skills through the medium of play, and to step boldly into a vast array of dramatic worlds. Teaching is designed to nurture our pupils' physical and imaginative lives, enrich their natural capacity for empathy, develop practical theatre skills and encourage their ability to work generously with others.

Dance, including ballet, is introduced using choreographed movement and physical exercise, with classes to enhance children's natural creativity and develop their self-confidence. There is a strong emphasis on creativity and imagination. Our dance lessons increase pupils' physical skills, stamina, creativity, expression and musicality.

Music enriches the life of our pupils and our schools in class lessons and beyond. Every child experiences the creative process of music making and is encouraged in their aesthetic and emotional response to music. Lessons include improvisation, composition, performance, listening and movement. There are opportunities for 1-1 instrumental or voice lessons Year 1 upwards. Pupils show a great commitment to music from an early age and relish the wealth of opportunities to perform to parents, teachers and friends. Children are encouraged to get involved in extracurricular musical activity in order to learn

how to work together and gain confidence in their own abilities.

During their time at the school, pupils explore a broad repertoire of performance forms and the children's experiences are further enriched by cross-curricular collaborations.

4.8 Physical Education

The PE curriculum is very generously provisioned. We have a fully inclusive approach through which all pupils progress at their optimum pace and fulfill their potential with confidence and enthusiasm.

All year groups are taught in all disciplines by specialist PE staff. They learn age-appropriate sports including football, rugby, cricket, netball, hockey, gymnastics, swimming, athletics, team games, cross-country, tennis and lacrosse, along with a full programme of fixtures, competitions and tournaments. We have a healthy series of inter school competitions, which the children relish. We also have a strong record in matches against local schools and regularly attend tournaments and festivals held by other schools in and around London and nationally.

Whatever their skill level or ability, our aim is for all pupils to enjoy being involved in sport and to strive to be the best that they can be.

4.9 PSHE

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) is the overarching term for our schools' local approaches to teaching and developing a culture of wellbeing so that we live both positively and healthily at school and beyond.

We equip our pupils with the societal skills they need to thrive as individuals, family members and global citizens, whilst preparing them to navigate an increasingly complex, competitive and connected world.

We believe that inspiring every child will establish a culture of excellence at every level, supporting and enriching our pupils by developing a positive approach to wellbeing through our schools' individualised programmes: Inspiring Living, Learning for Life, Wellbeing and PSHE. We aim to support wellbeing, build character and teach life skills, preparing our pupils for tomorrow's world.

We fulfil our responsibilities regarding the teaching of RSE.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 EYFS

The Reception teams deliver the seven Areas of Learning with specialist teaching also timetabled. *(For further details see School supplements).*

- Prime Areas:
 - Communication and Language (class teacher leads)
 - Physical Development (Reception team, Dance and PE teachers)
 - Personal, Social and Emotional Development (class teacher leads)
- Specific Areas:
 - Literacy (class teacher leads)
 - Maths (class teacher leads)
 - Understanding the World (class teacher leads, Computing teacher)

- Expressive Arts and Design (class teacher, Music, Drama, Dance and Art teachers)

5.2 Thomas's Outdoors

Outdoor education offers our pupils unique opportunities and experiences that cannot be taught within the classroom and is scheduled regularly for every pupil. Experiences enhance the pupils' development of critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, enquiry and self-reflection.

The school values are at the heart of Thomas's Outdoors. Pupils' learning is designed to develop self-esteem, build confidence and resilience and improve wellbeing. Provision also develops the skills of leadership and 'followship' (the ability to stand back and work as part of a team). Pupils are exposed to an element of risk in a controlled and caring environment and learn to develop strategies to manage and overcome challenges and begin to make a realistic assessment of their own personal strengths and weaknesses. By immersion in nature pedagogy pupils will learn to explore and appreciate the wonder of the natural world. Older pupils face realistic challenges and scenarios where the emphasis is on collective problem solving, leadership and teamwork.

5.3 Digital Learning

Digital resources and instructional technology enable us to provide purposeful and engaging 'blended learning' opportunities for our pupils. Pupils from Year 3 onwards are provided with one-to-one devices to enhance, rather than replace, traditional resources. All pupils have access to a mobile device to create, share and invent within and beyond their classroom environment. We use a wide range of apps and websites to deepen our pupils' understanding and to develop their competencies, so that they can navigate complex media and environments that are rich in technology.

5.4 Extra-curricular Activities

Our pupils enjoy an unusually rich school day with a generous allocation of time and specialist input in the Arts and Sport and through our extra-curricular programme we extend, challenge and enhance the day to day experiences.

5.5 Pedagogy and Planning

We adopt a dynamic, enquiry mindset approach, which prepares our pupils to think deeply, ask and answer 'big' questions and to apply their learning. This pedagogy can be applied to any age, subject or to a cross-curricular collaboration. Enquiries, a series of 'Investigations' and 'Quests', are an integral part of teaching and learning.

Our taxonomy, IDEAS (Identify, Describe, Explain, Apply, Summarise), is the learning pathway and a guide to what we aim that learners will achieve throughout a unit of work. *(For further details see School supplements on pages ? - ?)*

Our cross-schools curriculum plans - our long term plans - guide our pedagogy and practice and set out our progression of core competencies, expectations and content. The curriculum is set cross-school and locally implemented.

Medium term planning (MTP) is a collaborative process amongst year group teachers and subject teams. It will include:

- Overarching question and intentions

- Areas of learning covered and cross-curricular links
- Links to Thomas's Taxonomy (IDEAS)
- Expectations and skills addressed
- Learning tasks
- Assessment opportunities
- Enquiry planning follows The Learning Cycle - Preparation, Wonder, Discover & Act, Record & Capture, Publish & Celebrate, Prove

Short term planning (STP) is each teacher's detailed breakdown. There is no set format and MTP and STP can be combined.

- It will always include individual lesson Learning Intentions, which must be a question
- Success Criteria will always be noted
- STP is a vehicle for assessment and as such is evaluated
- Assessment for Learning strategies are noted
- Lesson plenaries are used as assessment opportunities
- Differentiation for individuals and groups is integral to STP

5.6 Learning Environment

High quality learning environments are maintained to ensure the effectiveness of the curriculum.

5.7 Groupings

Our structure and staffing enable groupings to support differentiation. Some academic subjects are ability and parallel set or grouped to allow for more targeted teaching and learning. In addition intervention groups are deployed where necessary. Groupings are fluid and are part of monitoring and evaluation processes.

5.8 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment is an integral and vital part of teaching and learning as it informs planning and individual next steps. Assessment for learning strategies are embedded in our practice. Regular summative assessments are carried out to establish level of attainment, which also inform future planning.

Teachers use assessment information to track progress of individuals and groups of pupils and middle and senior leaders use it to monitor outcomes and the implementation and impact of the curriculum.

Reports to parents give clear, accurate and measurable information on children's progress. **See Thomas's Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy.**

5.9 Additional Needs

Teachers have high expectations for all pupils. Formative and summative assessment is used to set ambitious targets and plan challenging learning tasks for all groups including:

- More Able pupils
- Pupils with additional needs
- Pupils with English as an Additional Language
- Summer born children

Teachers ensure that there are no barriers to pupils achieving to the best of their ability. Lessons are planned so that opportunities help pupils to access and succeed in all subjects, providing effective support and appropriate challenge.

Each School has a qualified Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator/ Head of Learning Support or Learning Enrichment Leader. Their role is to support staff in identifying pupils' difficulties and planning teaching strategies, to liaise with parents and outside agencies, to co-ordinator any extra help that may be required and to plan additional support and interventions.

We identify and meet the needs of pupils who are particularly able and those for whom English is an additional language. Each school has leadership responsibilities for these groups.

We work closely with other professionals to ensure that pupils' needs are met.

5.10 Homework

Home learning supports the pupils' learning in school; this progresses gradually in terms of time commitment through the year groups. Each school has specific guides and timetables for each year group, which are published to parents. *Refer to School Specific Supplements*

5.11 Continuing Professional Development

CPD has a high priority at Thomas's; it is focused on school development targets, curriculum development, statutory requirements and personal professional development (PPD). This takes various forms including peer observation, professional learning groups, internal and external conferences and speakers and further study e.g. Masters degrees.

Thomas's also has a commitment to initial teacher training.

6. MONITORING

This Curriculum Teaching and Learning Policy was fully revised and rewritten in December 2020 in the light of the Thomas's Curriculum review.

The Principals monitor the impact and effectiveness of this policy holding the Heads to account for its implementation. Curriculum development is a cross-schools process and delivery is monitored and evaluated by the individual school's leadership teams. The teaching teams in each school ensure that the curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

Each school has a monitoring and evaluation programme overseen by senior leaders. In addition middle leaders (Subject Leaders/ Heads of Department) are responsible for monitoring the way their subjects and areas of learning are taught throughout the school.

Monitoring methods include learning walks, advisory lesson observations, teaching and learning reviews, work scrutinies, subject reviews which include stakeholder voice and moderation. **See School Supplements for further details.**

7. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This Policy bears due regard to the following statutory guidance and other advice.

DfE Statutory Guidance 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education' (June 2019)

DfE 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (April 2017)

DfE Statutory Guidance 'Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice' (January 2015)

DfE 'Equality Act 2010' (May 2014).

The Education Act 2011

8. POLICY REVIEW RECORD

This policy will be reviewed every two years unless there is a change in legislation		
Created: December 2009	By:	Jill Kelham, Vice Principal
Revised version: December 2020	By:	Annette Dobson, Headmistress, Fulham Joanna Copland, Vice Principal Clare Oswald, Deputy Head – Academic, Battersea Shazia Chand, Deputy Head – Academic, Clapham Suzy Bell, Curriculum Deputy Head, Fulham Kelly Miller, Deputy Head – Academic, Kensington Dianne Barratt, Consultant
Approved: December 2020	By:	Tobyn Thomas, Ben Thomas, Principals Simon O'Malley, Headmaster, Battersea Phil Ward, Headmaster, Clapham Annette Dobson, Headmistress, Fulham Jo Ebner, Headmistress, Kensington Ben Thomas, Head, Battersea Square
Next Review: October 2022	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal Cross-School Leads