



The Curriculum

At St James' we are proud of the way we have developed our curriculum and our approach to teaching and learning.

We firmly believe that the way we teach enables even our youngest learners to engage fully in the learning process, helping them to develop independence, responsibility and the ability to choose and make decisions about their learning.

So, why do we do it this way? In the last 10 years or so more has been discovered than ever before about how the brain works and how learning takes place. This amounts to about 80% of what we now know about the brain so the findings have, or should have, revolutionised the approach to teaching and learning in schools. These findings have enabled teachers and educators to develop teaching and learning strategies that can accelerate pupils' achievement.



Because of this new knowledge we can understand what the best conditions are for us to learn.

Learning at St James'

Research has shown that effective learning takes place when you:

- ✚ Stay calm
- ✚ Have time to think
- ✚ Are able to ask for help
- ✚ Feel good about yourself
- ✚ Enjoy learning
- ✚ Spend time with your friends
- ✚ Stay fit and healthy
- ✚ Drink lots of fresh water

Our motto at St James' is 'Make every day different and memorable'; a tall order, but vital to effective learning. If a child or adult is *involved* in their learning, if they are *joining in* and *enjoying* their learning and *emotionally involved* in their learning then the more they will remember.

Learning will be long term and memorable if it:

- ✚ Is relevant to you and you care about it
- ✚ Excites you and stimulates your imagination and emotions
- ✚ Brings back memories
- ✚ Makes you want to find out more
- ✚ Challenges you to think

All the staff at St James' have spent a considerable amount of time thinking about how we learn and what learning is. For us learning is about:

- ✚ Being adventurous
- ✚ Creating ideas
- ✚ Discussing with peers
- ✚ Questioning things
- ✚ Working with others
- ✚ Being active
- ✚ Imagining possible solutions
- ✚ Showing initiative
- ✚ Taking responsibility
- ✚ Self-evaluating

Growing, caring and learning together

We have discovered through the work of Professor John West-Burnham that we can look at learning as being at three levels: **shallow, deep and profound.**

What sort of learning takes place at each level?

Shallow learning is teacher led and can include these sorts of activities.

- Phonics
- Mental maths
 - Number bonds
 - Times tables
 - Counting
- Handwriting
- Punctuation and grammar facts
- Scientific facts
- Historical facts
- Geographical facts
- Spelling
- Learning colours
- Cutting out
- PE skills

Deep learning encourages children to use the skills they have acquired in shallow learning and to become more responsible and independent in their learning.

- Understanding how multiplication works and applying that knowledge
- Maths investigations and problem solving
- Word problems
- Comprehension – high level questions
- PE – Having learnt skills, using them to play games
- Sharing with others what they've gone home and found out
- Applying spelling/phonics to reading or writing
- Writing a story or other pieces of writing
- Improve with musical instruments
- Colour mixing
- Role-play
- Imaginative play
- Independent construction art, models

Profound learning is when what children have learnt becomes personal to them and allows them to engage with ideas and thinking.

- Creating ideas
- Creating music or drama to perform
- Poetry
- Questioning – being analytical
- Evaluating
- Reading for pleasure
- Sharing knowledge with others
- Independent creative writing
- Investigating
- Problem solving
- Child initiated play and learning
- Writing unknown words – experimenting with genres such as poetry
- Child initiated, e.g. inventing own experiments
- Planning, designing and creating models

The activities we listed in shallow learning are valuable and necessary but if children remain stuck at this shallow level they are unable to make links in their learning or to use what they already know to build their learning and they could become passive and unquestioning.

How do we foster this deep or profound learning?

- ✚ We provide many opportunities for learning, by giving the children high quality teaching and developing their capacity to learn independently.
- ✚ We plan exciting topics that capture children's imaginations and bring learning to life.



- ✚ We encourage them to persevere if things get tricky, to ask questions and to work collaboratively with others.
- ✚ We ensure that the classrooms and the areas outside are what we call enabling environments. The resources the children need to initiate their own play and learning are readily available to them so that they become increasingly independent and responsible.
- ✚ We give them plenty of opportunities through Challenges to build on the learning they have developed through focus group or whole class teaching.
- ✚ We ensure they learn the skills they need to make good progress such as phonics, handwriting and mental maths strategies.
- ✚ We monitor their progress through teacher assessments and observations so that the next steps in learning are clear and are understood or even identified by them.
- ✚ We get them out of doors because any curriculum subject can be taught outdoors as well as in and because we believe that all children should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of their learning. What they see, hear, taste, touch, smell and do outside of the classroom gives six main 'pathways to learning'. Children are intensely curious and we believe they should be encouraged in this and given the opportunity to explore the world around them using all their senses. Physical activity helps children to develop coordination of brain and body; vital for large and fine motor skills. In fact, movement is actually what allows children to sit still!



- ✚ We take them out of the school to experience culture, the arts and the environment.
- ✚ We encourage them to sing, listen to and compose music.



- ✚ We invite theatre groups, authors, illustrators, nurses and local people to speak to the children and inspire them.
- ✚ We allow them to learn through their play. The following has been written about the importance of play: 'Play can be (and often is) a very serious business. It needs concentrated attention. It is about children learning through perseverance, attention to detail, and

concentration – characteristics usually associated with work. Play is not only crucial to the way children become self-aware and learn the rules of social behaviour; it is also fundamental to intellectual development.’

🏡 We have animals for them to care for: In schools that raise animals, children learn still more about life’s mysteries. They also learn responsibility and gentleness, some of our highest goals for them in their primary school years.



This is the level of learning we want all our pupils at St James’ CE Aided Infant School to achieve and believe that if we provide a curriculum full of exciting learning opportunities our children will be:

Adventurous, creative, inquisitive, collaborative, questioning, active, imaginative, able to use their initiative, problem solvers, responsible, persistent, investigative, independent, reflective, able to make connections in their learning, thoughtful and evaluative.

Forest School

Learning outside of the classroom is an embedded practice of the school. Woodpecker Forest School is run in the school’s woodland area by teachers and TAs who have Forest School practitioner training at Level 3 and Level 2.

All children have the opportunity to attend six sessions of Forest School during each year they are at the school.

The school has an outdoor classroom for outdoor learning to take place where children can use outdoor resources for Maths, Science, Geography, Music, RE and English.

Teaching at St James’

At St James’ we want to provide the best possible education for all children. We recognise that for our teaching to be outstanding it needs to include and achieve the following:

Engaged and challenged children	Happy children	Differentiation
Everyone making progress	Pace	Self, peer and teacher feedback
High expectations	Independence	Assessment for Learning
Links made to previous learning	Use of other adults	Dialogue
Effective communication with support staff	Clear structure	Timely, relevant feedback
Observation		Targets
Growing, caring and learning together		

Learning powers	Short, sharp objectives
Independent challenges	Effective questioning
Quality interventions	Children inspired
Talk Partners	Awareness of language
Opportunities to review learning	Effective behaviour management
Planning – clear learning journey	Resources and environment
Praise with feedback	Collaboration
Children can talk about their progress	Clear outcomes

Organisation

We organise our learning environments so that the children are able to develop independence and learn in different ways such as:

- whole class teaching;
- focus group teaching – group size can vary according to teaching and learning focus;
- collaborative learning in pairs or groups;
- independent learning to consolidate previous learning;
- child-initiated;
- one to one reading and interventions;

all areas of the learning environment will be planned for, including the outside areas, in order to ensure opportunities for a range of practical activities, which will develop appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding. All classrooms must have a Writing Area, a Prayer Station and a Role Play Area that are accessible at all times during the day.

Learning Environment Organisation

Reception	Year 1 (Autumn Term)	Year 1 (Spring/Summer)	Year 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one teacher or TA focus group • some independent challenges (no expectation for children to complete) • child initiated learning • free-flow all day indoors and outdoors • sensory carousel • Dough Disco & Squiggle while you Wiggle • Plan Do Review • 5-10 minutes whole class phonics every day • 5-10 minutes whole class mental maths every day • daily literacy carousel as appropriate • taught letter formation • explorers' session weekly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one teacher or TA focus group • independent challenges (growing expectation of how many to complete) • English and Maths learning daily • child initiated learning • access all day indoors and outdoors • 5-10 minutes whole class phonics every day • 5-10 minutes whole class mental maths every day • daily literacy carousel • taught handwriting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one teacher and one TA focus group • independent challenges (with expectation for most children to complete all) • English and Maths learning daily • child initiated learning • access to outdoor area • 10-20 minutes whole class phonics every day • 10-20 minutes whole class mental maths every day • daily literacy carousel • writers' workshops • taught handwriting • morning maths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one teacher and one TA focus group • independent challenges (with expectation for most children to complete all) • child initiated learning • access to outdoor area • 20 minutes whole class phonics, spelling and grammar every day • 20 minutes whole class mental maths every day • daily literacy carousel • regular writing workshop • taught handwriting

The Values and Vision

The school's Christian distinctiveness, ethos and atmosphere underpin all that we do at St James' CE Aided Infant School.

At St James' CE Aided Infant School we uphold and nurture our Christian ethos by encouraging the values of friendship, thankfulness, forgiveness and trust.

We will develop children's self-esteem and sense of worth by creating an environment in which they feel positive about themselves and confident to have a go and take risks in their learning.

We will make learning exciting, challenging and fun through our rich and creative curriculum, making every day different and memorable.

We will strive to meet the strengths and interests of every child by identifying their needs and matching provision.

We will create a safe, healthy and happy school community in which children and adults are cherished and valued.

We will care for the environment and the wider world and be actively involved with our community.

Staff will support the ethos of the school by:

- providing a calm and engaging working environment, in which each child can produce his or her best work;
- providing a welcoming environment, in which courtesy, kindness and respect are fostered;
- providing positive role models;
- providing a fair and disciplined environment, in line with the school's behaviour policy;
- effective management of their professional time;
- developing links with all stakeholders and the wider community;
- valuing and celebrating pupils' success and achievements in all aspects of learning in and outside of school;
- reviewing personal and professional development in order to ensure a high level of professional expertise.

Celebration

Children's achievements are celebrated in display and performance. Each child is given an opportunity to have work displayed during the school year. Each week Learning Powers certificates are given to celebrate individual or group achievement. Adults respond to children's work focussing on the process of learning.

Differentiation

Differentiated tasks will be detailed in weekly planning. Learning objectives will be specified for all differentiated teaching and reference will be made in weekly plans to Individual Education Plans where appropriate. Pupils with special educational needs (including gifted and talented children) receive support from our inclusion manager and support staff. Extra support is given in the classroom from teaching assistants. Additionally, advice is sought from relevant external support agencies when and where the need demands it. (See Special Educational Needs Policy)

Roles and Responsibilities

Learning and teaching is a shared responsibility and all members of the school community have an important part to play. (See Home-School Agreement) All members of the school community should work towards the school's aims by:

- cherishing children as individuals and respecting their rights, values and beliefs;
- fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community;
- providing a well ordered environment in which all are fully aware of behavioural expectations;
- offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life and recognising the importance of different cultures;
- encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviours and the process of learning;
- working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another.

Teachers will endeavour to:

- provide a challenging and stimulating curriculum designed to encourage all children to reach the highest standard of achievement;
- recognise and be aware of the needs of each individual child;
- ensure that learning is progressive and continuous;
- be good role models, punctual, well prepared and organised;
- keep up-to-date with educational issues;
- provide clear information on school procedures and pupil progress;
- have a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise;
- establish links with the local community to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life;
- work collaboratively with all involved in education to develop a shared philosophy and commonality of practice.

Subject leaders have a variety of roles. These include:

- taking the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in their subject throughout the school;
- supporting colleagues in their development and implementation of the scheme of work, and in assessment and record-keeping activities;
- monitoring progress in their subjects and advising the Headteacher on action needed; taking responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for their subjects;
- using release time to support colleagues;
- keeping up-to-date through reading and attending relevant courses.

Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning by:

- ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, well-rested and in good health;
- ensuring that their child arrives at school wearing the correct uniform and bringing necessary equipment;
- providing support for the discipline within the school and for the teacher's role;
- supporting the work of educational targets and becoming actively involved in the implementation of any support programme;
- participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainment;
- ensuring early contact with school to discuss matters which affect a child's happiness, progress and behaviour;
- ensuring that all contact addresses and telephone numbers are up to date and correct;
- encouraging their child to become increasingly independent as they progress throughout the school;
- informing the school of reasons for their child's absence;
- actively supporting the Home-School Agreement.

Pupils are encouraged to support the school's aims by:

- coming to school regularly and on time;
- being organised by bringing their book bag, library book and contact book;
- behaving well in school, on the playground and on the way to and from school;
- taking increased responsibility for their own learning by using their learning powers.

The community is invited to support the school by:

- contributing to activities, such as assemblies, outings, clubs, etc;
- organising activities and events throughout the year to extend and deepen pupils' knowledge and skills;
- supporting school events;
- helping as volunteers in the classroom.

Home learning

We want to encourage children to share their school experiences with parents or carers to consolidate their learning.

We believe this will develop a working partnership that encourages the children to make good progress spiritually, socially, morally and academically.

We want to encourage the children to develop learning as a life experience, not just at school.

We aim to promote the learning of Basic Skills, especially those of literacy and numeracy.

A range of activities may be sent home at different times in order to:

- Enhance or develop school experiences.
- To consolidate children's learning by gaining extra perspectives from home.
- Give more practice.

The main focus of regular home learning will be on reading.

Foundation Stage

A reading and letter formation guide is given to every parent/carer on entry to school to help parents to continue with their child's learning at home.

English

- Practise words and sounds.
- Reading with parent/carer (daily) if possible.
- Learn key words when sent home weekly.
- Weekly Jolly Phonic letter formation sheets to be used to make an alphabet book.

Problem-Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy

Reception children are encouraged throughout the year to count, to observe shapes and numbers in the environment and to use money when out shopping. Further ideas for this can be found in the booklet given to parents when children start school.

Key Stage One**English**

Reading with parent/carer for up to 20 minutes daily, using home/school book to communicate.

'Words of the Week' are sent home at the end of the week. These support the learning taking place in the classroom throughout the week.

The wider curriculum

Children will be posed a challenge, asked to carry out tasks or answer a question which reinforces or extends their learning. This might be practical in nature such as a game or investigation, or an activity to complete. Parent/carers are encouraged to participate in the activities, continue the learning at home and make comments in the home/school book.

All children

Home learning is to help and support pupils.

Children are encouraged to continue with activities that they are involved with out of school, i.e. after school clubs. Parents and carers are encouraged to promote a healthy balance between home learning and out of school activities that ensures their child's positive all round development. We understand that there may be times when it is not possible to carry out home learning activities and there will not be any sanctions if activities are not completed.

We hope our Teaching and Learning Handbook has been of use to you and shown what our school's approach and ethos is.

Please refer to the school's website where you can find more information about Teaching and Learning at St James' CE Aided Infant School.

www.st-james-infant.kent.sch.uk

<http://www.st-james-infant.kent.sch.uk/about-us/policies/>

<http://www.st-james-infant.kent.sch.uk/learning/curriculum/>