



# Willowtown Community Primary School

## LEARNING



Willowtown Community Primary School is clear and focused in its aspirations for the school's curriculum.

We aim to offer an exciting curriculum which inspires all of our children and staff to achieve their full potential.

Our staff comprise highly qualified and experienced practitioners who strive to keep the children at the highly focused their learning.

It is our aim to foster and encourage children to be highly motivated, have a thirst for knowledge, a love of learning and most importantly to have confidence in themselves and in what they can achieve.

Our school community is always prepared to embrace new initiatives which will assist in our aims.

We will seek through the formal and informal curriculum to:

- Develop lively, enquiring minds.
- Ensure that children have developed skills to work as an individual and also as a member of a group.
- Encourage individual development so that when they leave our school children are prepared for the 'next step'.
- Ensure a level of appropriate skill in Literacy, Numeracy, thinking and reasoning skills and Information Technology.
- Promote the importance of Welsh culture through Cwricwlwm Cymreig.
- Promote the understanding of responsible citizenship.
- Build strong personal relationships.
- Develop respect for their own and others' cultures and traditions.
- Develop an understanding of spiritual and moral values.

The principles of our curriculum and organisation of the school day ensure that the requirements of the Foundation Phase and National Curriculum are satisfied, and that all children receive a broad and balanced education.

Pupils are taught in a variety of settings through a range of teaching strategies – whole class, small group, pairs and individually. Key Stage 2 pupils may be taught at certain times throughout the year in ability sets for literacy and numeracy. Due to pupil numbers it may also be necessary to teach children in mixed age settings. Such flexibility and variety guarantees we are meeting the individual needs of all our pupils.

## **FOUNDATION PHASE**

In our school, Foundation Phase refers to the curriculum in all classes from Nursery to Year 2.

Foundation Phase practice places great emphasis on the holistic development of children and the development of skills across the curriculum building on previous learning experiences and knowledge. By providing a broad, rich and exciting curriculum using a variety of approaches we aim to develop children as individuals, recognising their level of maturity and interests.

The areas of learning are:

- Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity
- Language, Literacy and Communication
- Mathematical Development
- Welsh Language Development
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical Development
- Creative Development

The Foundation Phase is a crucial time for developing lifelong learning skills. Children will learn how to observe, listen, respond and develop as individuals and as members of a caring community.

## **KEY STAGE 2**

In our school, Key Stage 2 refers to the curriculum in all classes from Year 3 to Year 6.

All children follow the National Curriculum core and foundation subjects as well as Religious Education and Welsh as a Second Language. This builds upon the skills and knowledge developed in the Foundation Phase.

The core subjects are English, Maths, Science and ICT. History, Geography, Design Technology, Music, Art and PE are the other foundation subjects.

## **KEY SKILLS**

The children at Willowtown Community Primary School follow a skills-based curriculum, based on Foundation Phase and National Curriculum guidance. There is a great emphasis on the development of skills throughout the curriculum.

## **LITERACY AND NUMERACY FRAMEWORK (LNF)**

The Literacy and Numeracy Framework was implemented in September 2013. It sets out the skills that the children are expected to develop throughout their time in school, from ages 5 to 14. The LNF is split into components for literacy and numeracy. The literacy strands are: oracy across the curriculum; reading across the curriculum and writing across the curriculum. The numeracy strands are developing numerical reasoning; using number skills; using measuring skills and using data skills.

In addition to the LNF, teachers provide opportunities for children to develop their thinking and reasoning skills and ICT across the curriculum.

This year, we are aiming to make our children increasingly aware of the key learning skills that they use during their learning and every class teacher has these displayed in their classrooms which they refer to in each lesson. In addition to the skills highlighted above, children also refer to the skills of Cwricwlwm Cymreig and health and wellbeing.

The children are given opportunities to develop these skills through subjects which are taught discretely and through half-termly topics which are primarily skills driven.

As a school we value the development of skills and are highly committed to ensuring your child is well equipped with the necessary skills for lifelong learning.

## **SEAL**

SEAL stands for Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning and the skills it covers include:

- Dealing with feelings such as anger and frustration
- Getting on with other children and seeing things from other points of view
- Settling arguments fairly
- Feeling confident, taking responsibility and standing up for themselves (without being aggressive)
- Reaching their goals – keeping going and bouncing back
- Dealing with change, loss and bullying
- Solving problems and making good choices

Every class in Willowtown, from Nursery to Year 6, is now teaching these skills, which are launched and promoted through half-termly whole school assemblies. This is because educational experts have found that these skills are just as important as academic learning in helping children to become happy, confident and successful in life. In fact, being competent in these areas of what is known as “Emotional Intelligence” enables children to achieve highly in all areas of the curriculum.

The SEAL programme is made up of seven units; six of these last for roughly half a term and the seventh focuses on Anti-Bullying Week in November. Children revisit each theme once a year as they progress through the school, building on and extending their knowledge and understanding with age-appropriate resources. At the beginning and end of each unit, special assemblies are held by the headteacher promoting and celebrating the learning.

As we develop the use of the SEAL programme at Willowtown, we are also introducing some small group activities through which our Teaching Assistants will provide additional support to any children who may need it.

## **BUILDING LEARNING POWER (BLP)**

Building Learning Power is about:

- Helping young people become better learners
- Developing their learning power
- Preparing young people for a lifetime of learning

In our school, BLP is becoming an integral part of our approach to learning and teaching from Nursery to Year 6.

We talk to the children about the '4 Rs' needed for them to become good learners.

The '4 Rs' teach the children that they need to be:

- Resilient – sticking at it, not giving up
- Resourceful – knowing what to do when you don't know what to do
- Reciprocal – working together to solve problems
- Reflective – think, plan and do

Within each of these 'capacities of learning' there are different learning muscles, which we develop throughout the school in an age appropriate way.

## **BILINGUALISM**

English is the main language of communication, teaching, learning and assessment at Willowtown Community Primary School. However, the school is committed to promoting the aims and aspirations of the Welsh Government in developing Bilingualism.

In our school both English and Welsh are functional languages. We promote oracy, reading and writing in both English and Welsh Second language in informal and structured situations. Welsh has been given an audible and visual place in and around the school, including school assemblies and concerts, signage and display, Welsh lessons and indoor and outdoor activities. The children who attend Welsh club are used as good role models in the use of the language around the school.

As a school we therefore aim to:

- Foster positive attitudes in all learners towards bilingualism.
- Provide opportunities for children in Foundation Phase to hear and use Welsh in all areas of their learning.
- Motivate the children to use Welsh naturally, spontaneously and with confidence in all aspects of school life.

## **ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING**

All children starting in Nursery and Reception are given a Baseline Assessment. Teacher assessment is undertaken throughout the year and at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 results are reported nationally.

Assessment serves to inform teachers and school leadership in providing for groups of children, including MAT learners and those with additional needs.

The purposes of our procedures are to:

- Assist pupils to know where they are in terms of strengths and areas for development and what action needs to be taken to further progress.
- Inform all sections of the community, primarily teachers, parents/carers and governors of pupils' progress including pupil self-assessment and peer-assessment.

A range of assessment techniques are employed which we value as a tool for learning. Detailed records are kept so that as a school we can measure and monitor our effectiveness.

Parent consultations are of paramount importance in maintaining regular dialogue with parents. Opportunities are given to meet teachers during the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms with an annual report being sent out at the end of the Summer term.

## **ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN)**

In line with our ALN policy we aim to identify children with ALN as early as possible and ensure that appropriate provision is made to match their needs. This includes children with learning difficulties and those more able pupils who require additional challenge.

In our school, the role of ALNCo (Additional Learning Needs Coordinator) is carried out by our Inclusion Manager, who liaises with class teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies to ensure suitable provision for identified pupils.

We use this staged approach of the Additional Learning Needs Code of Practice when identifying pupils with Additional Learning Needs:

- School Action
- School Action Plus
- Statement

Parents will be invited into school when we feel a child should be placed on the Additional Learning Needs register. An educational plan is constructed in consultation with the ALNCo and the class teacher where additional needs are identified. From this an Individual Educational Programme (IEP) is drawn up with a number of specific targets designed to address and improve learning. Progress is monitored throughout the term and any necessary amendments are made. Plans are reviewed twice yearly but may be modified in the interim depending upon the progress being made. IEPs for children in Foundation Phase and IEPs for children in Years 3 – 6 at School Action Plus are reviewed three times a year.

We work very closely with a range of outside agencies to ensure the best provision is available for our children. Parental permission is sought prior to contact with outside agencies, for example the local authority's Educational Psychology Service.

Consultation between staff in Year 6 and Year 7 in our feeder secondary schools ensures a smooth transition for children with any form of additional need.

## **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

The school actively supports and promotes the educational achievement of looked after children under the close supervision of the Inclusion Manager. The school participates fully in support and wellbeing meetings arranged jointly with Children's Services and carers.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Religious Education is provided in school as part of the basic curriculum under the guidelines of the 1988 Education Reform Act and in accordance with the statutory requirements. The approach is multi-cultural with a strong emphasis on Christianity.

The programmes of study, attainment targets and assessment are approved locally through the Blaenau Gwent Agreed Syllabus on Religious Education.

Collective worship in school is conducted through allocated assemblies, class reflections and a weekly whole school 'Start the Week', class and 'Praise' assemblies.

Visiting speakers, including Christian ministers and representatives from various charities often take assemblies.

Any parent who wishes to exercise their right under the 1988 Education Reform Act to withdraw their child from assemblies or RE lessons are asked to contact the headteacher in writing.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Physical Education is a statutory requirement and an essential component in establishing a basis for a healthy lifestyle. We aim to provide as many sporting experiences for our children as possible. All staff are committed to encouraging children to take an active part in the outdoor play, games and PE activities provided. During their time at the school children enjoy a diverse range of sporting activities such as football, netball, rugby, athletics, swimming and tennis.

Games, swimming and PE form part of the curriculum requirements for all children at Willowtown Community Primary School except those permanently excused on health grounds. Such cases must be supported by a medical note from your doctor.

The school regularly participates competitively in netball, soccer and rugby against a number of other schools. Additionally, teams are entered for other events such as swimming and tennis championships.

All children will have the opportunity to participate in residential outdoor pursuit activities during their time at the school. A list of suitable PE clothing is provided under uniform requirements.

## **HOME LEARNING**

Home learning is a very important part of a child's education and can add much to a child's development. We recognise that the time and resources available limit the educational experience that any school by itself can provide; children benefit greatly therefore from the mutual support of parents and teachers in encouraging them to learn both at home and at school. We see home learning as an important way of establishing a successful dialogue between teachers and parents. One of the aims of our school is for children to develop as independent learners, we believe that home learning plays a significant part in the children's acquisition of these important skills.

Home learning plays a positive role in raising a child's level of achievement and attainment. We also acknowledge the important role of play and free time in a child's growth and development. Whilst home learning is important, it should not prevent children from taking part in the wide range of out-of-school clubs and organisations that play an important part in the lives of many children. We are well aware that children spend more time at home than at school, and we believe they develop their skills, interests and talents more fully when parents encourage them to make maximum use of the experiences and opportunities that are available outside of school.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL**

The school's philosophy and practice regarding equal opportunities are linked with our inherent ethos and belief in equality for all. We believe that we should cater for the needs of all children in our community regardless of race, culture, religion and ability. We believe in equal opportunity for both staff and pupils. All children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum allowing them to achieve standards according to their levels of ability and aptitude. Staff understand how factors such as nationality, language, gender and social circumstance can impact on learning. Work is planned, organised and delivered to take full account of the needs of each individual child. We are compliant with the Discrimination and Disability Act.

## **SEX EDUCATION**

The school's programme of sex education as agreed by the Governing Body is linked with areas of National Curriculum and also a broad based social education. The main emphasis is on relationships and will reflect the needs of pupils as they develop over the Key Stages. The school nurse offers puberty talks in Year 6 giving

pupils the chance to discuss sensitive issues in an informal setting. Parents will be notified when this is to take place and may exercise their right to withdraw their child on request.

## **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

School Council have had another busy year and have helped to organise and arrange many events since September. The committee has worked hard within their roles and have undertaken their duties very seriously, ensuring agendas have been set by the chairperson minutes have been shared on the School Council noticeboard by the secretary, so that pupils are aware of and have a say in what is happening in Willowtown.

## **ECO CLUB**

Eco Club have been very busy this year undertaking lots of activities to ensure pupils at Willowtown take care of the environment. They are working hard towards the Bronze Award.

Some of the activities our Eco Club members have focussed on this year have been piloting a new Blaenau Gwent Council recycling scheme throughout the school and encouraging litter picking around the school grounds, as well as setting up and choosing the fish for our new lobby area fish tank!

