



Curriculum Policy

Our vision is built on our strong Christian Values and that **“with God all things are possible”** Matthew 19:26
Our offer is closely aligned to the Church of England vision to live **“Life in all its fullness”** John 10:10.

At St Thomas’s our strong vision supports a curriculum that aims to

Inspire- All learners through the places they visit and the people they meet

Believe- That even in the face of adversity, anything is possible.

Achieve- Through what we know, learn and understand

Introduction

At St Thomas’s CE Primary School, our curriculum encompasses all the planned activities designed to promote learning, personal growth, and development. It includes not only the formal requirements of the National Curriculum, but also a wide range of enriching experiences that support the holistic development of every child.

We believe that education extends beyond academic achievement. Our curriculum is carefully structured to nurture curiosity, creativity, resilience, and a sense of responsibility. Through a blend of high-quality teaching, engaging topics, and meaningful opportunities, children are encouraged to explore the world around them and develop the skills they need to thrive.

In addition to classroom learning, we offer a rich programme of extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils’ experiences and broaden their horizons. These opportunities—ranging from sports and music to enterprise and global learning—help children discover new interests, build confidence, and form lasting relationships

Values

We are a learning community built on our core values of



Intent

At St Thomas's CE Primary School, our bespoke curriculum—"Where are we going and who will we meet?"—is designed to introduce children to *"the best that has been thought and said"* and to fulfil our mission of Ambition for All. It provides the essential knowledge and experiences needed to become educated, thoughtful citizens of the future.

This global and people-focused approach ensures that, through most subjects, children embark on a journey around the world—'visiting' different countries and 'meeting' a diverse spectrum of people. This not only broadens their geographical understanding but also deepens their appreciation of culture, identity, and history.

Our curriculum is broad, balanced, and knowledge rich. It is built around two guiding questions:

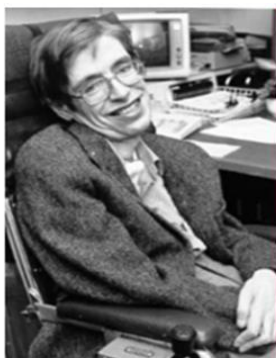
- **Where are we going?**
- **Who are we going to meet?**

These questions underpin our commitment to developing pupils' understanding of the wider world and significant individuals—both past and present.

Our school values—Inspire, Believe, Achieve—are woven throughout our curriculum design:

- **Inspire:** We inspire all children through the places they explore and the people they encounter. Learning is enriched through a wide range of experiences including museum and cinema visits, guest speakers, after-school clubs, Forest School, enterprise projects, themed weeks, and the opportunities outlined in the St Thomas's Charter.
- **Believe:** We nurture belief in every child that anything is possible, even in the face of adversity. This is rooted in our Christian ethos: *"With God all things are possible"* (Matthew 19:26). Our curriculum reflects the needs of our community and promotes inclusion, ensuring every child—regardless of gender, need, disability, race, or wealth—can succeed.
- **Achieve:** We support children to achieve through what they know, learn, and understand. Progress is built on knowing more and remembering more, through a carefully sequenced and progressive curriculum. Pupils meet people from a range of cultures and backgrounds and explore places that are inspirational and thought-provoking. By the end of Year 6, children leave us multilingual, literate, numerate, and ready for the next stage of their education.

We place the development of cultural capital at the heart of everything we do. Cultural capital empowers children to thrive in today's diverse society, promoting social mobility and success beyond the classroom. It equips them with the knowledge, skills, and characteristics needed to aspire, achieve, and rise—regardless of their starting point.



"Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious. And however difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at. It matters that you don't just give up."

Stephen Hawking

At St Thomas's, we have been inspired by the words of Stephen Hawking:

"Look up at the stars and not down at your feet."

This quote has shaped our understanding of cultural capital and guided the design of our curriculum. We believe that every child should be given the knowledge, experiences, and inspiration to reach beyond their immediate circumstances and aspire to greatness.

Our curriculum celebrates the creativity and achievements of individuals and civilisations from all walks of life and diverse cultural backgrounds. Every subject is designed to spark curiosity, encouraging children to wonder about the world and the universe around them.

We teach children to look up—to dream, to question, and to explore. By learning about achievements made in the face of adversity, children develop resilience, a growth mindset, and the belief that ***however difficult life may seem, there is always a way forward.***

From the Early Years Foundation Stage, we prioritise the development of speech, language, and communication, ensuring children become confident speakers who can express themselves clearly and appropriately in a range of contexts. Vocabulary is explicitly taught and embedded across the curriculum.

Our curriculum takes children on a journey around the world, helping them build a rich bank of knowledge and experiences. We believe that knowledge brings power—the power to think critically, to understand others, and to see the world in new ways.

A knowledge-rich curriculum provides our children with the cultural capital they need to be socially mobile, enabling all pupils—regardless of background or disadvantage—to succeed in life. We teach children that there is always something they can do and succeed at, and that they are capable of leaving a lasting impression on the world.



St Thomas's has signed up to work with Unicef UK to become a Rights Respecting School. Unicef is the world's leading organisation working to ensure that children everywhere can access and enjoy their full range of human rights, as set out in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

By joining the Rights Respecting Schools programme—alongside over 5,000 schools across the UK—we are part of a significant and growing movement to transform the way children experience their education and their childhood.

Becoming a Rights Respecting School ensures:

- The whole school community learns about children's rights and sees them as central to our values, vision, and mission.
- Mutual respect for rights informs all practice and relationships across the school.
- External validation recognises that we have embedded children's rights into our ethos and everyday practice.

Our RRS Steering Group is made up of representatives from Key Stage 2, who act as a strong pupil voice. They play a key role in confidently and purposefully driving school improvement, ensuring that children's rights are not only taught but lived throughout our school.

Literacy

At St Thomas's, we use the Literacy Tree to deliver a rich, text-based English curriculum that ensures all children are immersed in high-quality literature. The carefully curated texts provide a diverse, inclusive, and challenging reading experience that supports children in becoming well-read, thoughtful, and articulate individuals by the time they leave our school.

Each year group follows a sequence of core texts that span a wide range of genres, authors, and cultures. These texts are chosen not only for their literary merit but also for their ability to spark curiosity, promote critical thinking, and encourage children to question and explore the world around them. Through these books, children travel across continents, encounter a variety of perspectives, and develop empathy and understanding of global experiences.

Vocabulary development is a key focus throughout the Literacy Tree curriculum. Children are exposed to rich language in context, which supports their reading comprehension and equips them to become confident, expressive speakers. This is further enhanced by our Recommended Reads for each year group, which broaden children's reading experiences and foster a lifelong love of books.

Geography

Geography is a key curriculum driver at St Thomas's, providing children with a deep understanding of their local area, the UK, Europe, and the wider world. Our geography curriculum is structured around three threshold concepts: Locate, Place, and Techniques. These concepts guide children through geographical enquiry, starting with identifying where they are in the world, zooming into specific places, and investigating them using tools such as map skills and fieldwork.

To support these concepts, we have introduced Golden Threads that run through the curriculum: Physical Features, Human Features, Physical Processes, and Human Processes. These threads ensure continuity and progression in geographical understanding from EYFS to Year 6.

Children begin their global journey in EYFS, where Nursery pupils explore countries such as Pakistan, Spain, Mexico, and Australia. In Reception, children learn about the Kapiti Plain in Kenya and explore space, developing an early understanding of both terrestrial and extraterrestrial geography.

As children progress through the school:

- Year 1 explores Bury and the four countries of the UK, then locates Asia with studies of India and China.
- Year 2 investigates coastal regions and studies Kenya and the Masai people.
- Year 3 returns to the UK and explores rivers globally.
- Year 4 travels through European cities and the Mediterranean.
- Year 5 journeys through North and South America.
- Year 6 explores Oceania and concludes with a unit on *Our Diverse World*.

Our geography curriculum also promotes economic awareness and aspiration. Through initiatives like Enterprise Week, children learn about employment, financial stability, and the exciting possibilities the future world of work holds.

History

History is also a key curriculum driver at St Thomas's, enabling all children to explore, understand, and celebrate the achievements of a wide range of civilizations and individuals throughout time. Our curriculum is designed to foster curiosity, critical thinking, and a deep appreciation of the past, helping children make meaningful connections to the present.

We have introduced three main threshold concepts to structure historical learning:

- Building an Overview of World History
- Understanding Chronology
- Investigating and Interpreting the Past

To support these concepts, we have embedded Golden Threads that run through the curriculum: Society, Cultures and Pastimes, Conflict, and Beliefs. These threads ensure continuity and depth across year groups and topics.

Children build an overview of world history by developing their understanding of constructing the past, significance, cause and effect, and identifying similarities and differences across time periods. Chronological understanding is developed through sequencing events and using timelines to place historical periods and figures in context.

When investigating and interpreting the past, children engage in historical enquiry, using a range of sources as evidence to draw conclusions and deepen their understanding.

Our curriculum reflects and celebrates the diverse backgrounds of our pupils. Children, many of whom come from Muslim families, explore the rich legacy of Ancient Islamic Civilizations in Key Stage 2, celebrating the contributions of Muslim scholars, scientists, and artists. They also meet early hunter-gatherers, influential figures from Ancient Greece, and local historical figures such as those from the Industrial Revolution, including Sir Robert Peel. In Year 4, children learn about Boudicca and her resistance to Roman rule.

In Key Stage 1, children study significant individuals who challenged societal norms and made lasting contributions:

- Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole, who made remarkable achievements in healthcare despite adversity.
- Nelson Mandela and Rosa Parks, whose legacies continue to inspire movements for justice and equality.

Science

Our Science curriculum celebrates the achievements of scientists from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and of all genders, ensuring that children see themselves reflected in the world of scientific discovery. This inclusive approach fosters aspiration and curiosity, helping pupils understand that science is for everyone.

Children develop rich scientific knowledge through a carefully sequenced and progressive curriculum, aligned with the National Curriculum from Year 1 to Year 6. Teachers build on prior learning to ensure pupils *know more and remember more*, deepening their understanding of key scientific concepts over time.

Subject-specific vocabulary is explicitly taught and revisited, enabling children to articulate their scientific thinking with precision and confidence. Opportunities to apply and use this vocabulary are embedded throughout lessons and extended through challenges that deepen learning.

Art

At St Thomas's, our Art curriculum takes children on a creative journey around the world, exploring global art and design traditions while celebrating diversity and innovation. Through this approach, pupils develop a deep understanding of the formal elements of art—line, shape, colour, texture, pattern, and space—alongside their ability to generate ideas, experiment, and evaluate their own work.

Children respond both visually and verbally to a wide range of artists and creators. Throughout their time at St Thomas's, they 'meet' and learn from:

- Portrait artists
- Craftspeople
- Designers
- Sculptors
- Architects
- Photographers
- Cartoonists
- Inventors

Their artistic experiences are rich and varied, including:

- Weaving and printing
- Working with clay
- Soap sculpture
- Creating visual representations of poetry
- Exploring the role of a curator in a gallery
- Developing digital art skills

This curriculum not only nurtures technical skill and creativity but also encourages children to think critically about art, reflect on their own work, and appreciate the contributions of artists from different cultures and backgrounds.

Design and Technology

At St Thomas's, our Design and Technology curriculum provides children with hands-on, purposeful experiences that develop their creativity, problem-solving skills, and technical knowledge. Pupils explore a wide range of materials, tools, and processes as they design, make, and evaluate products across different

contexts.

Children build knowledge in cooking and nutrition, learning about seasonal ingredients and healthy eating. This culminates in planning and preparing a three-course meal using foods that are in season—an experience that combines practical skills with an understanding of sustainability and food provenance.

Throughout their time at St Thomas's, pupils design and make a variety of mechanisms, including:

- Moving storybooks
- Pneumatic toys
- Slingshot cars
- Automata toys

They also investigate structures, exploring the design and function of:

- Windmills
- Castles
- Pavilions
- Bridges

In textiles, children develop skills through progressive projects that include making:

- Puppets
- Pouches
- Cushions
- Waistcoats

These experiences are carefully sequenced to build technical knowledge, encourage innovation, and foster resilience. Children are encouraged to reflect on their designs, respond to feedback, and celebrate their achievements as young designers.

Music

Across St Thomas's, we deliver a high-quality music education through our partnership with the Bury Music Service. This ensures that all children have access to expert teaching, a broad range of musical experiences, and opportunities to develop their skills in performance, composition, and appreciation.

Children learn to listen actively, explore musical elements, and express themselves through singing, playing instruments, and creating music. The curriculum is designed to be inclusive and engaging, allowing pupils to experience music from different cultures, genres, and historical periods.

Through whole-class instrumental tuition, ensemble opportunities, and performances, children build confidence and develop a lifelong love of music. Our approach supports progression in musical knowledge and skills, while also celebrating creativity and collaboration.

Physical Education

The PE curriculum supports children's physical development and promotes a lifelong love of movement and sport. Pupils learn and refine skills across a wide range of disciplines, including:

- Netball

- Athletics
- Ball skills
- Dance
- Gymnastics
- Hockey
- Football

These experiences are enriched through a variety of after-school clubs, which provide additional opportunities for skill development, teamwork, and personal growth.

Our commitment to health and wellbeing extends beyond PE lessons. Whole-school initiatives such as Health Week, Stay and Play sessions, and training workshops actively involve families and support them in making informed, healthy lifestyle choices. These experiences help embed the importance of physical and mental wellbeing across our school community.

Computing

At St Thomas's, we aim to prepare our learners for the future by equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in an ever-changing digital world. Understanding and using technology confidently and safely is essential for children's futures—both at home and in the workplace.

We follow the Kapow Computing scheme, which provides a carefully sequenced and progressive curriculum across four key strands:

- Digital Literacy
- Computer Science
- Information Technology
- Online Safety

These strands are revisited regularly through engaging themes and projects, ensuring that learning is embedded and skills are continually developed. Teachers build on prior knowledge to help children *know more and remember more*, supporting long-term understanding.

Online safety is a priority, and children are taught how to navigate the digital world responsibly and respectfully. Computing also supports creativity and cross-curricular learning, enriching pupils' experiences and helping them apply their skills in meaningful contexts.

PSHCE/RSE

At St Thomas's, our PSHE curriculum is designed to support the development of confident, resilient, and emotionally literate learners who are equipped to navigate the complexities of modern life. We follow the Kapow PSHE/RSHE scheme, which provides a structured and progressive approach to personal development, relationships, health, and citizenship.

To further support children's mental health and wellbeing, we embed the My Happy Mind programme across the school. This evidence-based curriculum helps children build positive habits around self-awareness, resilience, relationships, and emotional regulation. It complements our PSHE provision by giving pupils the tools to understand their brains, manage their emotions, and develop a growth mindset.

Our PSHE curriculum covers:

- Relationships and health education
- Mental wellbeing

- Citizenship and British values
- Economic understanding and aspirations
- Online safety and digital responsibility

Learning is enriched through assemblies, themed weeks, pupil voice activities, and cross-curricular links. Children are encouraged to reflect, discuss, and apply their learning in real-life contexts, helping them to become thoughtful, respectful, and responsible members of society.

RE

Our Religious Education curriculum is rooted in the Bury Agreed Syllabus, supported by Understanding Christianity and guidance from the Blackburn Diocese. This comprehensive approach ensures that children in Key Stage One and Key Stage Two develop a deep and respectful understanding of faith, belief, and spirituality.

Our curriculum introduces children to five world faiths—Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Sikhism—as well as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, reflecting the diversity of beliefs within our school and wider community. Children explore the beliefs, practices, and values of these religions, learning both *about* religions and *from* them.

Pupils are encouraged to reflect on what it means to have faith and to develop their own spiritual understanding. They learn from one another by sharing personal experiences and perspectives, fostering empathy, respect, and dialogue.

Religious Education at St Thomas's enables children to investigate and reflect on some of life's most fundamental questions. It promotes critical thinking, cultural awareness, and moral development, helping pupils to become thoughtful, informed, and compassionate citizens.

Maths

At St Thomas's, we follow the Maths — No Problem! programme from Key Stage One onwards. This mastery-based approach ensures that all children develop a deep, secure understanding of mathematical concepts through carefully structured lessons.

Each lesson begins with an 'In Focus' task that encourages problem-solving and discussion. Children work collaboratively using concrete materials to explore mathematical ideas before moving into guided practice. Teachers lead discussions using targeted questioning to challenge thinking and move learning forward.

The whole class progresses through the curriculum at the same pace, with ample time spent on each topic to ensure depth of understanding. Concepts are revisited at increasingly sophisticated levels as the curriculum spirals through the years, supporting long-term retention and mastery.

To support fluency and recall:

- Times Tables Rockstars is used to make learning multiplication facts engaging and memorable.
- NumBots is used in Key Stage One to strengthen understanding of number bonds and early number sense.

Together, these tools help children build confidence, accuracy, and enjoyment in mathematics, preparing them for the next stage of their learning.

At St Thomas's, we firmly believe that our bespoke curriculum—"Where are we going and who will we meet?"—leaves a lasting impression on every child who passes through our school. By the time they leave us in Year 6, our pupils are not only well-equipped academically but also enriched with experiences, values, and perspectives that shape who they are.

We hope that the impact of our curriculum extends beyond the classroom—that children from St Thomas's leave a lasting impression on everyone they meet. They are seen as curious, confident, and exciting members of society, who approach life with wonder and ambition. They are children who, in the words of Carl Sagan, *"look to the stars and not at their feet."*

Implementation

Organisation and Planning

Our curriculum at St Thomas's is organised around the central concept: "Where are we going and who will we meet?" This theme underpins our yearly curriculum map, which outlines the subjects taught to each year group across the academic year. It ensures that every child experiences the full breadth of the National Curriculum.

In Key Stage One, staff and subject leaders sometimes group areas of learning from different subjects where themes naturally overlap. This allows for a more creative and cross-curricular approach, encouraging children to apply their skills in varied and meaningful ways. However, the majority of subjects are taught discretely, ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum.

The yearly overview is reviewed annually and remains flexible throughout the year. This adaptability allows us to respond to the needs of current cohorts, embrace diversity, and incorporate real-world events and issues that are relevant to our children's lives and learning.

- Medium-term plans ensure coverage of all foundation subjects. These include clear learning intentions, differentiated activities, and identified vocabulary for explicit teaching.
- Short-term plans, written weekly or daily by teachers, set out the learning for each session, including resources, activities, and vocabulary focus.

Teachers at St Thomas's set high expectations for every pupil. Planning includes:

- Deepening tasks for pupils working at or above expected standards
- Keep-up activities for those slightly behind
- Catch-up support for pupils working below age-related expectations

We are committed to inclusive education. Teachers plan with consideration for pupils with low prior attainment or those from disadvantaged backgrounds, using appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and ensure all learners thrive.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Early Years Foundation Stage at St Thomas's, our curriculum is also built around the concept: "Where are we going and who will we meet?" This thematic approach provides a meaningful and engaging framework for young learners, helping them begin their journey of exploring the world and connecting with others.

The yearly curriculum map for EYFS is carefully planned to address gaps in children's knowledge identified when they enter Nursery and then Reception. The EYFS team designs the curriculum around what they believe to be the essential knowledge children need to succeed and transition confidently into Key Stage One.

Planning is informed by:

- Assessment of prior knowledge
- Children's interests
- Preparation for KS1 expectations

Children's interests are thoughtfully woven into planned learning, allowing for responsive and personalised experiences. These interests are developed further through high-quality adult interactions within the provision, ensuring that learning is both child-led and purposeful.

EYFS staff continually reflect on how best to support children in accessing the KS1 curriculum, ensuring that planning is both aspirational and developmentally appropriate.

SEND

At St Thomas's, our curriculum is designed to be inclusive and accessible for all children, regardless of their barriers to learning. Our bespoke curriculum—"Where are we going and who will we meet?"—has been carefully crafted to ensure that children with additional needs have every opportunity to succeed and thrive.

We deliver the curriculum through Inclusive Quality First Teaching principles, supported by a set of non-negotiables that guide consistent and effective practice across the school. These ensure that all children receive high-quality teaching that meets their individual needs.

Where necessary, we adapt the curriculum in consultation with the child and their parents/carers to ensure it remains relevant, meaningful, and achievable. For children with identified Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND), we follow a robust early identification and intervention pathway to provide timely and targeted support.

Teachers use provision mapping to plan for and monitor the progress of children with additional needs. This ensures that provision is:

- Responsive to individual needs
- Regularly reviewed
- Clearly documented

Our provision for SEND pupils complies fully with the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice (2014). We are committed to setting ambitious targets for all learners, including those with low prior attainment or from disadvantaged backgrounds, and to ensuring that every child is supported to achieve their full potential.

The Role of the Subject leader

At St Thomas's, subject leaders play a vital role in ensuring the quality, consistency, and ambition of our curriculum. Each subject leader is responsible for driving improvement, maintaining high standards, and ensuring that the curriculum is inclusive and accessible for all learners.

The role of the subject leader includes:

- Staying up to date with national and local developments in their subject and attending relevant CPD.
- Ensuring curriculum design is sequential, progressive, and accessible to all pupils.
- Providing strategic leadership and direction for their subject.
- Supporting and advising colleagues on subject-specific pedagogy and curriculum delivery.
- Monitoring curriculum implementation, assessment, and pupil progress.
- Managing resources efficiently to support high-quality teaching and learning.
- Embedding local context, including the locality of Bury and surrounding areas, into subject planning and delivery.

Subject leaders are given non-contact time to fulfil these responsibilities effectively. They regularly review how their subject is taught, plan for improvement, and ensure that development planning aligns with whole-school priorities.

Each subject leader:

- Reviews curriculum plans to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum.
- Checks that learning intentions are clear and that progression is evident in schemes of work and pupil books.
- Measures impact by reviewing end-of-unit assessments, identifying strengths and areas for development.
- Works to ensure the curriculum meets the needs of all learners, including those with SEND, through inclusive planning and provision

Impact

Monitoring and Review

At St Thomas's, curriculum planning and delivery are closely monitored by the leadership team to ensure consistency, quality, and impact. Planning is treated as a working document, regularly reviewed to ensure it reflects current practice and supports effective teaching and learning.

Leaders conduct book looks to ensure:

- Clear progression is evident in pupils' work
- Learning intentions are consistently identified in planning
- Feedback aligns with the school's marking policy and supports pupil progress

Throughout the year, the leadership team and subject leaders carry out learning walks to evaluate the breadth and balance of the curriculum and its alignment with our central theme: *“Where are we going and who will we meet?”* These walks also assess:

- How learning is evidenced in classroom environments
- Whether environments actively support and enhance learning
- Pupils’ ability to confidently discuss their learning using newly taught vocabulary

Subject leaders also monitor the storage and management of resources, ensuring they are accessible, well-organised, and support curriculum delivery. Feedback from monitoring activities is shared with year groups or individual staff members to celebrate strengths and address areas for development.

This collaborative and reflective approach ensures that our curriculum remains dynamic, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all learners.

Assessment

At St Thomas’s, we use a streamlined 1, 2, 3 assessment system to track pupil attainment, which aligns with national standards: 1 represents Working Towards the Expected Standard (WTS), 2 indicates Working At the Expected Standard (EXS), and 3 reflects Greater Depth or Higher Standard (HS). Teachers make termly judgements based on a combination of classroom evidence and any relevant test scores, all of which are entered into Insight Tracking. Following each assessment week, pupil progress meetings are held to review outcomes, identify any emerging concerns, and ensure that no child is left behind in their learning journey.