

Curriculum

At Stephenson Way Academy and Nursery School we use an integrated approach to curriculum planning and delivery, with links made between themes and subjects. Our curriculum is designed so there is an overarching theme and main curriculum subject embedded in each curriculum unit. Generally, each year group completes two main themes per year. These are known as curriculum semesters, with each one lasting for approximately three half terms. Themes are chosen carefully in order to provide opportunities for children to develop their Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural understanding. In term of curriculum subjects, we have chosen to focus on two main areas: science and humanities, as the main “driver” subjects within each semester. These aspects are closely aligned to two of our special features, which are environmental studies and historical enquiry.

Since each semester has a clear overarching theme, with a key subject underpinning it, we have taken a different approach to delivering individual subjects. Rather than treating curriculum subjects as standalone areas of learning, we endeavour to infuse curriculum content into reading, writing and mathematics lessons. For example, children could read and write about historical events in English or apply science based concepts when learning new mathematical skills. Using this approach we feel children will be more deeply immersed in curriculum learning since they can focus on specific areas of the curriculum for a sustained period of time rather than complete isolated curriculum lessons on a weekly basis. We still fully recognise the importance of developing subject specific curriculum knowledge and understanding, so time is set aside to ensure children “get to grips” with curriculum content as well as applying skills in context. We feel that this approach to our curriculum will enable children to be successful learners and independent thinkers.

We are hopeful that our approach to curriculum design means that children have the time and opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of curriculum matter and apply skills across all subject domains. We are constantly reviewing and refining our curriculum approach, because we are eager to give children the best possible curriculum experience we can. As often as possible we attempt to build on children's interests, but as a school we closely follow the National Curriculum Programmes of Study when devising new topics and themes. Below are our curriculum plans for each year group. Each plan highlights the curriculum theme, main literature source which underpins the theme, and key questions for stimulating reflective attitudes to social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Our National Curriculum content and themes are outlined below:

Y1	“Big Bus” Historical Tour: Historical Events in London History theme	Time to Rhyme: A study of Julia Donaldson stories Early Language and Literacy theme.
----	--	--

Y2	Newton Aycliffe Central Station: A study of George Stephenson and the rise of the Rocket History theme	Woodland Conservation Trust: A study of local habitats Science theme
Y3	Animal Rescue Centre: Animals rights Science theme	SWANS Newsroom: Natural Disasters Geography Theme
Y4	NASA (Newton Aycliffe Space Agency): Space Exploration Science theme	Museum of Antiquities: Ancient Egypt History theme
Y5	War Rooms: A study of World War II History theme	Super Growth Garden Centre: A study of living things Science theme
Y6	Victorian Britain: Crime and Punishment History theme	FAME (Final, Amazing, Musical Extravaganza): End of Year Production Arts theme
Vertical Learning Group Units	George's Kitchen Nightmares: Cooking with the Kranky's (George's Marvellous Medicine) PSHCE and basic literacy theme	Valhalla: Viking culture and beliefs History theme
Additional Units	Operation Africa: A study of an African nation Geography theme	Dream Factory: Living with the BFG PSHCE and basic literacy theme

As mentioned, wherever possible we attempt to have a science theme in each year group, since we recognise the importance of science teaching and learning, and the role that science and technology has played in the development, history and culture of our region. In addition, we endeavour to include a humanities subject as the other theme so that children can develop an appreciation of their place in the world and the impact that the past has had on their present. One of our special features is historical enquiry, so our curriculum allows for us to develop this aspect of learning and children's curiosity. Our main curriculum is enhanced by visits, visitors and theme days.

Alternative Curriculum Pathway

In addition to our main curriculum we operate an **Alternative Curriculum Pathway** which provides children with additional experiences in the arts subjects, creative and performing arts, environmental studies and science, as well as sports and games.

Specialist teachers are used to enhance children's musical skills through our choir and Samba band tuition groups. In our choral group, children are taught how to sing in harmony and perform together. Children learn a wide range of musical styles from different musical eras. Recently, children have enjoyed learning and performing folk and pop songs, from artists including the Beatles and Simon and Garfunkel.

Creative and performing arts has been a successful addition to our curriculum for a number of years, with children learning how to act, dance, sing and perform on a regular basis. Children apply their skills across the school year in a number of performances, including short plays and musicals.

As a school we promote respect for the world around us and care for the natural environment. Through environmental studies and "working" in the school allotment and mini orchid, children learn about sustainability, recycling, nutrition and basic economics (since children sell their produce at school events). School is proud of its environmental element and has been awarded a number of prestigious awards and accolades for its work in this area.

Additional sports and games are integrated into the school curriculum through specialist coaching for our sports and games teams. As a school we recognise the importance that sport can play in raising self-esteem, developing positive habits such as team work, and promoting a sense of physical and mental well-being. We offer a range of opportunities through our coaching programme with activities including traditional sports such as football (for boys and girls) and performance sports such as gymnastics.

Our Alternative Curriculum Pathway is an additional feature used to enhance our main curriculum content.

Current Alternative Curriculum Pathway opportunities:

- Environmental studies
- Historical Enquiry
- Choir/choral group
- Samba Band
- Creative and performing arts
- Specialist sports coaching
- Boys' and Girls' football coaching
- Cricket coaching
- Netball coaching
- Basketball coaching
- Zumba and Salsa

- Design class
- (Experimental) Psychology
- Computer animation
- Conversational French
- Social games groups including: drawing and writing therapies

Early Years:

Our Early Years curriculum is constantly changing in order to meet the needs and interests of the children in Nursery and Reception. Its overarching aim is to enable children to develop in the following areas of learning:

- ***communication and language***
- ***physical development***
- ***personal, social and emotional development***
- ***literacy***
- ***mathematics***
- ***understanding the world***
- ***expressive arts and design***

This year, provision themes across the phase are: Jungle Fever; Heroes and Villains; and Heathrow Terminal 5

Please note provision themes may vary, depending on children's interest.

[Our approach to phonics](#)

[Curriculum Policy](#)