**St John’s Primary Hamilton**

**Curriculum Rationale**

**Introduction**

Building the Curriculum1 states;

“Each of the curricular areas makes its own unique contribution to developing the four capacities of children and young people. It does so both within its own disciplinary contexts and through connections with other areas of learning.” 2006

**Our Vision**

In our school community we will work together as a team to develop our children as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens by providing a safe, friendly and inclusive environment for motivating and challenging learning experiences.

In order to achieve this vision we aim to provide high quality learning and teaching in all curricular areas to develop our children as competent and confident lifelong learners.

**Rationale**

At St John’s Primary we strive to ensure that every child should experience the experiences and outcomes across all curricular areas to develop knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which will enable them to become effective contributors to society.

Our curriculum aims to develop key skills for Life, Learning and Work. At the centre of all that we do is high quality teaching and learning which is engaging and active. Staff and pupils set challenging goals and there is a shared high expectation of all.

**Aims**

• Provide an effective framework which is flexible and provides the opportunity for educators to be creative in the delivery of high quality learning and teaching in all curricular areas.

• Increase staff skills and confidence in teaching all curricular areas and ensure that the whole school community understands its role in developing a shared understanding of what the curriculum is.

• Ensure all learners are provided with maximum opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding in the use of skills and can apply these skills effectively and with confidence across the curriculum and in doing so promote links from one curricular area to another.

• Promote progression and continuity at all stages and across areas of transition to ensure a seamless, coherent and relevant curriculum for all

• Raise levels of achievement and attainment amongst all learners.

**Curricular Areas**

['Building the Curriculum 1'](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/buildingyourcurriculum/curriculumplanning/whatisbuildingyourcurriculum/btc/btc1.asp) divides the curriculum into 8 curricular areas.

The eight curriculum areas are:

* Expressive arts
* Health and wellbeing
* Languages
* Mathematics
* Religious and moral education
* Sciences
* Social studies
* Technologies

**Planning**

Teachers plan for 3 teaching terms each session and use the Progression framework based on the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes, focuses on subject knowledge and skills development and embraces the seven principles of curriculum design: challenge and enjoyment, breadth, progression, depth, personalisation and choice, coherence, relevance.

• Active learning and IDL topics provide opportunities for links to be made across curricular areas and for the development and practice of skills.

• Term 2 and 3 plans are devised to track and plan for Breadth of learning to ensure all children experience all experiences and outcomes at each level. Coverage of Experiences and Outcomes is tracked using stage planners for outcomes.

• Planning builds on prior knowledge and experiences to ensure Progression. Teachers track and evaluate pupils’ progress using daily observations, group and class assessments and formal assessments.

• Pupils are given frequent opportunities to revisit topics and apply previously learned knowledge and skills in new and unfamiliar contexts, hence promoting Depth of understanding.

• At all stages differentiation is provided through success criteria, choice of resources and organisation structures such as cooperative learning, flexible ability groups depending on the task; and additional input, support and challenge. This helps to ensure Personalisation of learning. We also provide Personalisation and Choice of learning in P1-7 by supporting all children to set individual learning targets across curricular areas and record these in their termly Learning Target sheets, when appropriate.

• Clear links are promoted between all curricular areas to draw different strands of learning together and provide Coherence.

• Every opportunity is taken to link learning to real contexts. This helps pupils to see the relevance of learning in their daily lives.

Teachers meet termly with SMT to discuss plans and evaluate pupil progress and set targets.

**The Ethos and life of the school as a community**

Our curriculum offers a broad range of learning experiences for our pupils, where the children contribute to the planning of learning in order to make it meaningful. Our pupils are encouraged to contribute to the school community and have opportunities to lead their own learning and to have their say in the evaluation of work.

Our shared vision and values are shared with pupils, staff and parents at assemblies, focus groups and Parent Council meetings. Our aims, vision and values are displayed in the foyer of the school and are discussed regularly at assemblies. We place a high value on achievement at our weekly assemblies where pupils are encouraged to share their achievements of the week. Photographs are displayed in the foyer to celebrate pupil achievements out of school.

School values are displayed in every classroom and House points are awarded to pupils for demonstrating these values in and out of class.

Building and being part of our school community is important to St John’s Primary and pupils are involved in a range of activities including Buddy System, Pupil Council, Rights Respecting School Group, Sports Committee, Eco Committee, House Captains and Vice Captains. These groups ensure that our pupil voice is strong and has a direct impact on the life of the school.

We offer a varied programme of after school clubs which reflect pupil interest and we encourage pupils to try out something new.

We have football, netball, badminton, dance, athletics, code club and lego club which offer a range of activities for pupils to participate in and build friendships after school.

Each class leads a whole school assembly over the session which showcases current learning and promotes our value of inclusion. Parents and carers are invited to attend to enjoy finding out more about what the pupils have been learning. In term 2 classes present at assemblies to their peers what they have bben working on in Health and Wellbeing and Rights Respecting School lessons linked to the UNICEF Launchpad.

**Learning and Teaching Strategies**

Learning and teaching activities draw upon a skilful mix of approaches in all primary stages including:

• Cooperative and independent learning

• Revisiting previous learning to ascertain skills and knowledge to build on

• Direct interactive teaching.

• Active learning with opportunities to discuss, observe, explore, investigate, experiment and play; ensuring that all children are appropriately challenged at their stage of learning.

* Multi stage/ class team teaching to promote inclusion and IDL providing opportunities for links to be made across curricular areas.

• Regular opportunities to discuss, communicate, explain and extend thinking; including the development of higher order thinking skills through problem solving and identifying strategies from Blooms Taxonomy.

• Contextualised learning linked to real life context or a context that is familiar to pupils’ experiences, for example listening, talking and writing linked to Social Studies topics.

• Appropriate and effective use of technology.

• Opportunities to communicate in a wide range of contexts, for relevant purposes and for real audiences, for example school shows and class assemblies

• Assessment is for Learning approaches including effective questioning, sharing of outcomes, self, teacher and peer assessment to identify success and plan next steps

**Assessment**

Assessment is carried out on a regular basis in and out of classes, focussing on taught skills and strategies across curricular areas. This is done by teacher observations, class challenges, weekly spelling and numeracy tests, appropriate mathematical assessments, presentations, Assessment is for Learning strategies (AiFL) and end of level assessments.

Children are assessed for **writing** three times per year in September, December and March. Results are tracked and next learning targets are set with children. Parents are informed of test results by letter. Monthly steps towards achieving the next goals are set by children and staff and shared with parents in learning target sheets.

Primary 2, 4 and 6 pupils sit a standardised assessment-National Group **Reading** Tests (NGRT) in March and results are communicated to parents by letter and tracked to monitor and ensure appropriate supports are in place and progress is maintained. Parents are invited to meet with Head Teacher if there is a concern.

End of level assessments are used to support teacher judgement for **numeracy** and **mathematics**. Pace and progress are tracked and monitored by SMT during forward plan dialogues.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

SMT will monitor the progress and the delivery of the curriculum by:

* having planning discussion meetings every term to discuss planned learning, coverage of the curriculum and observe and discuss progress of pupils by discussing evaluations of pupil attainment.
* monitoring literacy jotters/workbooks/Learning Target sheets /homework jotters, and discussing learning and teaching with selected focus groups of pupils
* formal observations of class/group lessons
* informal visits to each class during a variety of lessons
* carrying out regular audits to review school’s progress against national standards.
* Meeting with teachers to make end of term and end of session predictions for

children’s attainment.

**Equal Opportunities**

St John’s Primary School aims to provide equal opportunities for all pupils irrespective of ability, gender and cultural background. We strive to enable each child to maximise his/her potential.

Curriculum Rationale January 2017

Review date June 2018.