

LifeFull Schools: Our Curriculum

To find out more about our curriculum please click on the subject links on the previous page and read how our curriculum is designed below

Curriculum Design

Our curriculum is designed to develop children's character, intellect and curiosity. We have high aspirations for our children and aim to offer them a broad, challenging, diverse and engaging curriculum.

By the time children leave our school they will:

- Be kind, confident, well-mannered, thoughtful members of society who embody our Christian values.
- Speak confidently and in Standard English, with a broad range of vocabulary, in formal situations, for example children should be able to argue a point and greet a visitor .
- Have knowledge of a core set of books and poetry that they can make links to and draw upon.
- Have a broad general knowledge and understanding of the world for example of historical facts, geographical sense of place and religions.
- Have learnt about the histories of different groups of people from around the world.
- Understand the cultural and historical influences that have shaped this area of London.
- Be ambitious for their futures, expecting that he or she can follow career paths that take them onto higher education such as university or an apprenticeship.
- Enjoy and appreciate the arts and be able to participate in performances, for example music, poetry, dance and drama.
- Understand their body, how to keep it healthy and enjoy participating in sporting activities.
- Have healthy relationships with an age-appropriate understanding of sex education.
- Be able to keep themselves safe (both online and on the streets) and know how to avoid confrontation and resolve disputes peacefully through restorative approaches.
- Have a love of learning and self-efficacy around studying.
- Be passionate about looking after our world and take active responsibility for making a difference in our world.
- Understand and value the concepts of Global Human Values and contribute positively to our community.
- Respect each other regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, culture, gender, disability and wealth.
- Be courageous advocates for the causes they believe in.
- Be anti-racist and call out injustice.

What we know about how children learn

- Learning is defined as a change in long term memory.
- Our working memory is limited so it can become easily overloaded with too much new information.
- The more that is secured in our long-term memory the more we are able to think, because we free short-term working memory.

- Repetition is key to ensuring learning is not forgotten – we must be able to recall information the next week, month, term and year.
- Children need to achieve success but some level of difficulty, which forces children to think, helps with embedding information and knowledge in our memory. (Our brain rewards us with dopamine when we successfully meet a challenge.)
- People love stories, problem solving and making links.
- It is no good learning a series of facts out of context. We must combine facts to create knowledge and in turn apply this to create deep learning.
- Cultural capital is important to prepare children for future success.

The implications for planning our curriculum

- Our curriculum will be underpinned by our key drivers which are:
 - Our Christian values
 - The arts
 - Caring for the environment
 - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- We will plan a very broad, diverse curriculum which continually revisits key concepts.
- We will ensure there is representation of the nine protected characteristics; diversity of voice and narratives from many perspectives; and opportunities to interrupt inequalities. We will be mindful that what we choose to teach confers or denies power.
- The more knowledge of the world children have, the more likely they are to have the procedural and semantic understanding they need.
- Cultural capital gives our students the vital background knowledge they need to be thoughtful members of our community who understand and believe in our school values and Global Human Values. As a result we will:
 - plan to teach new tier 2 and 3 words each year – these will be planned in consultation with subject leaders.
 - ensure there is a set of texts which are carefully selected (for their vocabulary, range of subjects, enrichment, perspectives, complexity) which all children will have an entitlement to during their time at school.
 - regularly review our curriculum to ensure that it is reflective of the communities we teach and includes a diversity of knowledge.
 - continue to “diversify” the curriculum as we develop our own knowledge and pedagogy.
 - ensure our history curriculum tells the histories of stories of a diverse range of people and cultures.
- Tying our curriculum together are the concepts (disciplinary knowledge) in each subject area e.g in history the concepts include chronology and sources of evidence. There are also substantive concepts, for example: exploration, inspiration, migration and settlement, hierarchy and power.
- We do not rush through the curriculum. We will secure foundational knowledge and embed this through approaching material in a variety of ways to deepen understanding. Over-learning is key to ensure there is a change to long term memory.

- Knowledge organisers are used in some subjects (geography, history, science, RE). These are used to support learning in lessons and as a means to communicate with parents what pupils are learning in school. These are informed by the National Curriculum programmes, our schemes of work, and our proof of learning tasks. Knowledge organisers include the critical content of each unit of learning - this is the vital information pupils need to secure in order to apply it. They also include the key subject-specific vocabulary that pupils will learn in that unit.
- We use the local area as a means to aid understanding in a range of subjects. For example, local geographical fieldwork, local history enquiries, placing local history within national or internationally significant events.
- Opportunities to review knowledge will be aided through frequent low-stakes quizzes such as 10 daily questions, question quadrants and quick fire questions (the 3 Qs).
- Because it's impossible to assess children's learning in the short term we look at how well children are learning over time. We will use POL (proof of learning) tasks to check learning over time.
- We acknowledge that 'Wow' moments are memorable but do not in themselves lead to understanding of concepts. However they are useful in hooking in children's enthusiasm for learning.
- Trips and visitors are important and must have educational relevance and enable children to gain cultural capital. We will make use of the rich educational resources in London e.g. The Natural History Museum, V&A, Tate, Hyde Park and local community resources.
- We know that working towards meaningful outcomes gives a context that creates opportunities for deep learning.
- We acknowledge that creating our curriculum will always be a work in progress and it will need regular review and updates as new research is published and our knowledge develops.

Enacting the curriculum

How is our curriculum organised and what will children experience?

- Our curriculum is broad and balanced. Importance is placed on all subjects and time is allocated for each subject on a weekly basis (we do not "block" subjects with the exception of engineering).
- Our curriculum is diverse and provides opportunities for children to learn about different times, places, people and cultures each year.
- Our curriculum is driven by our values and mission statements.
- Effective teaching of speaking and listening underpins everything we do and is embedded across all subjects.
- The design of our curriculum is based on educational research and knowledge of how people learn.

Beyond the curriculum

At LifeFull Schools, we understand that providing pupils with enriching experiences enhances their learning and develops cultural capital. We offer all our pupils as many enrichment opportunities as possible. These are carefully mapped to enhance learning in all curriculum subjects, beyond the national curriculum. As well as high quality teaching and learning at our schools, we aim that every pupil at our schools will be offered the chance to:

Visit museums every year

We carefully plan museum visits for all year groups each year that support learning across the curriculum. Some of these places include the Design Museum, The British Museum, the Natural History Museum, Bank of England Museum, Science Museum, Petrie Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum. We also engage with special projects with museums. Some of these include: working with curators at the V&A to create our own pop-up museum; creating an [animation of Ananse tales](#) for permanent exhibition with the Natural History Museum; working with The Design Museum on a community plan for the redevelopment of the Trellick Tower area.

Visit an art gallery every year

At LifeFull Schools we believe that art and design is an integral part of a broad, balanced and inspiring curriculum. Art is one of our curriculum drivers. Pupils at our schools are artists. We ensure pupils learn about a diverse range of artists from around the world. We provide the pupils with the chance to visit an art gallery each year. For example, The National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, Tate Britain, Tate Modern, The Wallace Collection . We also engage with local artists and local and national projects. For example, The World Reimagined and Carnival artists such as Carl Gabriel.

Visit a range of religious buildings

As part of our RE curriculum, we take time to ensure that all of our pupils learn about different major religions and that they have the chance to visit places of worship in order to learn about different religions, traditions and cultures. For example a local synagogue, a local mosque, BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir Temple. We also regularly visit our local churches.

Experience an Overnight Stay

Residential trips form an important part of the philosophy of the schools. We believe that in order for children to have a well rounded education, it is important to experience learning in alternative surroundings that pose varying challenges. Our Year 5 pupils at St Thomas' and St Clement' travel to a location outside of London to an outdoor education centre where they spend four nights camping. They participate in a wide range of activities and learn new skills that can't be taught in a classroom setting. These include team building, orienteering, archery, campfire and shelter building as well as high-rope activities.

At Princess Frederica pupils undertake a trip away from home each year from year 2 (where they have a sleepover at school); increasing in length until year 6.

Watch a Performance in a Theatre

Having the opportunity to be part of an audience to watch a performance is an immersive, captivating and joyful shared experience. We want our pupils to see the value in watching drama, dance or live music and will ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to do this during their time at St Thomas' Federation. Our KS2 pupils every year go and see the pantomime at Lyric Hammersmith, and further performances have been at the Royal Opera House, to see the London Symphony Orchestra perform at the Barbican, or west end performances of the Lion King.

Our Local Area

We recognise what rich and unique areas North Kensington; Notting Hill and Kensal Rise are. We want our pupils to understand why the area in which they go to school is worth knowing about; strengthen their knowledge and appreciation of their local community and forge stronger links with that community; develop an identity and pride in

where they live; develop a sense of historical curiosity about their area and a sense of place. We therefore ensure we engage with local artists, historians and community leaders. Our history and geography curriculums both include local area studies and fieldwork.

Careers

At LifeFull Schools, we want to inspire and motivate pupils by equipping them with knowledge about a variety of careers. Pupils engage with in-person and online workshops by a variety of people from a diverse range of backgrounds and fields. For example, workshops run by artists, the NHS, chefs; Barclays bank. Our older pupils also get to visit at least one university, such as, to the engineering department of University College London. We engaged pupils in talks from the finance and asset management sector. Our Year 5 and 6 pupils take part in the Into University programme.

Learning a language

[Arabic at St Thomas’; French at St Clement & St James and Princess Frederica.](#)

Learning another language is a skill that we really value and from years 3 to 6, our pupils are given weekly Arabic or French lessons, where they are taught pronunciation and grammar as well as more about the language use itself within the world we live. St Thomas’ have chosen Arabic as it is a language that has local importance, as well as being one of the official languages of the United Nations and has been identified as one of the ten most important languages for the UK’s future.

To enter in local or national competitions

Throughout the academic year there are opportunities to engage with local and national competitions. From recent years, these have included: The Reader’s Cup with the Thomas’ Foundation, Primary Maths Challenge and local Maths Cluster, Leighton House Art competition.

Perform in front of an audience

We believe that it is a very valuable experience for our pupils to be able to perform in front of audiences as it helps to build their confidence and develop their speaking, listening and collaboration skills. Pupils will have a chance every year throughout their time at St Thomas’ Federation to perform, showcasing their dancing, singing and acting skills, in a Christmas performance, the KS2 Spring Cabaret; and an end of key stage musical. We also engage with the Bach Choir and the Primary Shakespeare Company to enrich the performance opportunities for our pupils.

Learn to play a musical instrument

Learning to appreciate, and play, music brings lifelong joy and fulfilment. As well as the cognitive benefits it brings, it fosters creativity and self-expression. We therefore will ensure that all pupils at LifeFull Schools will have the opportunity to learn to play a variety of instruments throughout their time at school, including the glockenspiel, ukulele, djembe, recorder, violin and steel pan. Outside our music lessons in school, we also currently offer weekly instrumental group lessons in Piano and violin which are taught by experienced professional musicians. All pupils in the school will be offered recital opportunities through the year.

Steel Pan

All our pupils in Key Stage 2 learn to play the steel pans. We are schools that sit along the route of Notting Hill Carnival and we want our pupils to know of the value of this international event and its musical traditions. Our lessons are taught by a professional steel pan musician, and pupils are given regular opportunities to perform this instrument. For

example, during Christmas events, at our own school carnival each summer, and when opportunities arise, in the community - this year some of our pupils played the pans at the book launch of a best-selling author.

Street dance

In addition to their other PE lessons, all pupils from EYFS up to year 6 receive weekly street dance lessons from an expert teacher. Pupils are given regular opportunities to perform dance. For example, at our annual Cabaret event of music and dance each Easter and at our summer carnival. In year 6, pupils will rehearse and perform a musical, which includes extensive choreography.

Learn to swim

Being able to swim safely is a fundamental life skill, as well as a source of enjoyment. We are proud to offer both Year 3 and 4 the opportunity to go swimming for two full academic years. Staff from our schools accompany pupils to the local leisure centre where instructors will teach our pupils how to swim safely and confidently.

Gardening

We are incredibly lucky to have a large garden as part of our school grounds and understand the wellbeing opportunities that being in nature brings. Our gardener provides pupils with the opportunity to learn about planting, seasonality and caring for the natural world around us.

Showcase your learning in termly events

Pupils at our schools are given the termly chance to showcase their learning to their parents and carers, and other pupils in the school. They have the opportunity to speak and present to audiences of varying sizes. This includes sharing their engineering projects; holding an art exhibition; presenting in a class assembly; teaching their parents in a mathematics lesson.

Take on extra responsibilities

Pupils at LifeFull Schools are encouraged to take on different roles and responsibilities throughout the school. Pupils are taught skills to complete successful applications and take part in a short interview for the role in order to mirror the real-life process. Roles include: Office Receptionists; Play Leaders; Gardeners, Tour Guides and Head Pupils.

Join a club

We believe in enhancing all pupils' experiences by offering a wide range of extra-curricular clubs which run every day after school. There should be no barrier to engagement, so we are incredibly proud to run all of these free of charge and will ensure all pupils have access to club opportunities. We aim to capture and extend pupil's interests with our offer: current club opportunities include coding, science club, art club, sewing, handball, gymnastics, and cricket. For more information visit our [clubs page](#).

Take part in a sports tournament or club

Throughout their schooling we provide pupils with the opportunity to represent the school in a variety of different sports teams. Our sports teams compete against other local primary schools for example in football, athletics and swimming. Sports matches are also organised for after school against local schools or within clubs.

OPAL Play

At LifeFull Schools we realise that learning happens beyond the classroom and so we use OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) to create diverse, engaging play opportunities for children at break times.

OPAL is a programme that enhances the quality of outdoor play for primary school pupils by providing a wide range of play opportunities during break times. Pupils can engage in active, creative, and imaginative play using varied materials and natural environments. These opportunities encourage physical activity, helping to improve health and fitness, while also promoting creativity through open-ended play like building, role-play, and exploring nature.

At playtimes, pupils have the chance to collaborate, problem-solve, and develop social skills by working together in group play. OPAL also allows children to manage risk in a controlled, safe environment, fostering resilience and confidence. The programme improves emotional well-being, reduces behavioural issues, and makes school more enjoyable, enhancing overall engagement and learning.