

Curriculum

Our curriculum is based on a thematic approach to foster a yearning to learn more through independent research. We encourage our children to use the school library as well as research tools such as the internet. We plan a range of education visits to provide the pupils with first hand learning experiences.

All children have full access to the National Curriculum. This consists of 5 core subjects; English, Mathematics, Science, Information Communication Technology and Religious Education. The foundation subjects are Modern Foreign Language, Design Technology, History, Geography, Art, Music and Physical Education.

National Curriculum documents, school policies and schemes of work are available to parents upon request.



Foundation Stage

On entry to our school, children are welcomed into our Reception/Year 1 class where they receive the Early Years/Foundation Stage Curriculum. We provide the children with a range of opportunities through 3 Prime areas of learning:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

And 4 Specific areas of learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts & Design

Children learn through play and interaction with other children and adults. You will always be kept informed of your child's progress, and Miss Cook or the Teaching Assistant will always be willing to spend time with you, as we realise that the first few weeks at school can be a time of concern to parents. We aim to make this a happy time for you and your child.

The National Curriculum is introduced to pupils in Year 1 and continues throughout their school days.

English

English plays an important part and is central to our curriculum. We recognise that by giving a substantial amount of time to teaching and practising the skills involved in reading, writing, speaking and listening our children will have the confidence to tackle tasks in other curricular areas.

Reading

Within school there is a wide range of reading material for children to choose from. In every classroom there is a selection of fiction and non-fiction books and poetry anthologies. In our library there are various non-fiction books which children may borrow. Some children may also read from our book bonding reading scheme, which are a combination of books from reading schemes and real books. This allows our children to experience a wide range of genres, interests and authors at an accessible level

We believe that reading is the key to all learning and our objective is to establish a voluntary habit of reading for pleasure and information. We encourage all children to take their reading books home and we do like parents to listen to them read and to discuss the story and characters.

We try to develop in our pupils the ability to communicate effectively in written and spoken English, in a variety of situations and to different audiences. Children are encouraged to listen and to read with understanding and pleasure material of a suitable level.

Writing

Writing is taught systematically throughout the school and covers all genres. We use the Revised Primary Strategy Framework to support ideas and planning, but are also aware of the needs of the children and the topic themes taught at that particular time.

We aim to extend the children's independent writing and creative English from a variety of sources e.g. current events, class topics, stories, poetry, visits, assemblies. We also have a large selection of non-fiction reference books, together with monitored access to the Internet, for children to use when researching specific topics.

We believe spelling is important and children will be expected to learn topic related spellings and basic spelling patterns and rules. We encourage all children to use a dictionary, as this is an essential skill.

Handwriting lessons help all children to develop a neat, cursive style and value is placed on original presentation of work.

Phonics

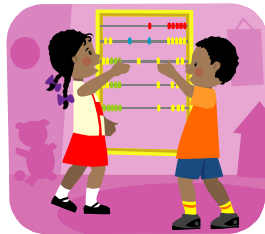
We follow the Letters and Sounds scheme with kinaesthetic support from Jolly Phonics where necessary. We also use the Soundwrite phonics scheme as an intervention for children who make slow progress with Letters and Sounds.

Children are taught a discrete phonics lesson for 20 minutes every day, in ability groups, until this is no longer required. The children's progress is tracked from Foundation Stage to ensure that they are well prepared for the Year 1 Phonics screening, which takes place in late June. In Year 2 we continue with phonics for those children who have not yet met the required standard, in order that they meet the standard at the end of Year 2.

We encourage all children to apply their phonic knowledge when reading and should further support be required our skilled Teaching Assistants are trained to facilitate small group work.

Speaking & Listening

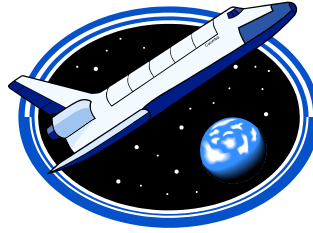
We consider that speaking and listening, either with a whole class or in a small group is very important. We aim to increase the children's spoken vocabulary and equip them with the ability to participate in discussions and debates with confidence and maturity.



Mathematics

Lower Halstow School follows the balanced programme of mathematics detailed in the Early Learning Goals and the Revised Primary Strategy Framework for Numeracy. Our aims are to teach children to learn and use the four rules of number; to develop increasing competence and confidence in aspects of Shape, Space, Measures and Data Handling and to develop their use and understanding of mathematical language and to use mathematics to solve problems. Mental agility in Mathematics is important and we would encourage you to help your child to learn their tables and to work out simple sums and problems in their head. Mathematics lessons consist of regular "Mental Maths Tests".

We teach Mathematics using a variety of resources, including ICT and follow the National Numeracy Strategy, with regular assessments against National Curriculum criteria.



Science

Science is taught mainly through topics and covers all aspects of the National Curriculum.

Science focuses on practical activities concentrating on improving children's observational techniques, predicting and investigational skills and on developing their awareness of living things and their interaction with the environment, materials and their properties and physical processes.

Scientific knowledge is taught to an increasingly complex standard and children are expected to use their scientific knowledge to plan their own investigations and draw conclusions.



Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

All children use a range of technology to support and enhance their learning. Our ICT suite is used by all our pupils. All classes have networked computer workstations which the pupils have access to at other times of the day. All our classrooms have Interactive Whiteboards which are used to enhance the pupils learning together with the use of control technology and digital cameras.

Pupils learn to apply their skills in word processing, data processing, spreadsheets, graphics, LOGO, email and in using the internet.

The school has an Internet Policy, which only allows access when an adult is present and is regularly explained to the children. The school uses a 'filter' to ensure protection against inappropriate material and to ensure access is via a secure environment.

Foundation Subjects

All pupils study the National Curriculum Foundation Subjects - Design and Technology, History, Geography, Art and Design, Music and Physical Education. All Key Stage 2 pupils study French as their Primary Foreign Language.

Art & Design

Art and Design is often linked with other curriculum areas. Children will develop their abilities in sketching and drawing. They will experiment with a range of mediums in 2D and 3D, increasingly gaining control, using a variety of tools, materials and techniques. Children will study selected artists to gain an appreciation of their work and aim to incorporate the different styles into their own work. A named apron or old shirt must be provided when working with paints, clay and other messy materials.



Design & Technology

In Design and Technology children will learn to use tools safely and design, make and evaluate various models.

History

In History children are encouraged to investigate and evaluate the lifestyles and events of the past, using both primary and secondary evidence, and to develop a sense of chronology. Your child will study some of the following: The Great Fire of London, The Romans, The Tudors, The Victorians, Life during World War II and Ancient Egypt.



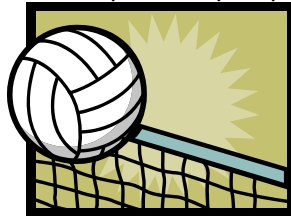
Geography

In Geography, map skills are taught using sketch maps, plans aerial photographs, local area maps, ordnance survey maps and atlases. Children will be taught about physical features, settlement, environment conditions and weather in the UK and different parts of the World. Field studies in our local area are undertaken to collect first hand data and, when appropriate children also use ICT.



Music

Music lessons include singing, percussion work, composition and critical analysis of famous musicians and their work. All Year 4 pupils learn the guitar during curriculum music and all Key Stage 2 pupils learn the recorder or ocarina as part of wider opportunities in music. In addition to class lessons, pupils may participate in group or individual instrumental lessons taught by peripatetic teachers from Kent Music School. These include; violin, piano, clarinet, flute and keyboard. There is the opportunity to learn acoustic and electric guitar from a private peripatetic teacher, Buster Gibbons.



P.E.

For Physical Education, the school has a purpose built Sports Hall, a playground and a large sports field. The school aims to ensure each child develops skills in P.E. appropriate to their own individual ability. We believe physical exercise should be enjoyable and we encourage an awareness of the importance of developing a healthy body. Our P.E. curriculum includes games, gymnastics, dance, athletics, swimming and outdoor and adventurous activities.



Swimming

Year 5 pupils have the opportunity to swim every year at the Swallows Leisure Centre during Spring Terms 3 & 4.

Modern Foreign Language

French is taught in all Key Stage 2 Classes. All children spend approximately 1 hour per week on conversational French and expanding the children's vocabulary.



Religious Education

The school has no specific denominational affiliation, but has close links with the local Church of England and celebrates seasonal festivities with the school leading the services. The vicar and members of the congregation lead a school assembly once a fortnight.

Our Religious Education lessons follow the Kent Agreed RE Syllabus, which is broadly Christian based. A copy is available in school. Our aim is to help children to understand and respect the religious and moral values of our society and to develop a positive attitude towards other races, religions and ways of life. They learn about different religions and learn how their values can be applied to everyday events.

Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship

Through an integrated approach we hope to develop in children a positive and informed attitude to their emotional and physical health and well being. We also aim to help them to acquire the necessary life skills to establish good personal relationships with their peers and other age groups. To assist us in teaching this aspect of our curriculum we invite the School Nurse, Liz Stevens and our Police Community Support Officer and other visitors to come and talk to the children at different times during their school life.

Some pupils find the transition between primary and secondary school difficult, so we offer a Social Skills/Transition group to ease this period in their lives. We also offer a mentor system for our new Foundation Stage pupils involving Year 6 pupils. We aim to ensure that everyone is included and feels valued.

Sex & Relationships

Part of our Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship also includes aspects of Sex and Relationships Education, which culminates in Year 6 with a DVD and talk from the School Nurse. Before the children receive any information on Sex and Relationships, parents are invited into school to look at the teaching materials. The School Nurse is available to answer any questions alongside the Headteacher. Any questions the children ask will be answered honestly based on information and not advice.

The school is developing the use of SEAL (Social & Emotional Attitudes to Learning) alongside QCA materials and other publications

Year 6 children have the opportunity to participate in Cycling Proficiency during the Autumn Term.

An optional annual 5 day residential educational visit for children in Years 4, 5 and 6 is organised in May each year. Previous visits have included Hayling Island, the Isle of Wight, Brecon Beacons and Hastings. This residential activity is always subject to available staffing and costs cannot be guaranteed as this is a chargeable event to parents/carers.

Lower Halstow and Newington Yearly Subject Cycles

KS1	Autumn	Spring	Summer
1	Recycling	Bears	The Sea
2	Healthy Eating and Living	Weather	Different Cultures
3	Ourselves	Journeys	Growing
KS2			
1	Tudors	WWII	Changes <i>-Local History Study</i>
2	Vikings <i>-Scandinavia -York</i>	Monsters of the Earth <i>-Dinosaurs -Mary Anning -Our impact on the environment</i>	Movies <i>-History of Hollywood Studios -Genre - Westerns recycling scenery etc -Animation -Script writing -Judaism</i>
3	Egyptians <i>-Ancient Egypt -River Nile</i>	Cultures <i>-Australia -India</i>	Mighty Mountains <i>-Volcanoes -Himalayan Civilisations</i>
4	London <i>-Victorians</i>	Aztecs <i>-Rainforest -Chocolate</i>	Sport <i>-Ancient Greece -Olympics</i>