

The Schools Vision and Approach to Education.

The principle aim of St. Gregory's R.C. JMI School is to ensure a Catholic education for the children of the Catholic communities of the parishes of St. Gregory and the Holy Rosary, South Shields.

The school exists to provide our children with a secure, caring, learning environment, which is founded on gospel values and the ideals of the partnership between home, school and parish.

The school curriculum, both formal and informal, is the vehicle through which the school's aims will be achieved, reflecting, as it must, the global vision of the school, expressed in the Mission Statement.

The curriculum, then, includes not only the formal programme of lesson, but also the informal programme of so-called extra-curricular activities as well as those features which produce the school's 'ethos', such as the quality of relationships, the concern for the equality of opportunity, the values exemplified in the way the school sets about its task, and the way it is organized and managed.

The National Curriculum, with religious Education, together with the distinctive contribution of the school's formal and informal policies, all contribute to the whole school curriculum.

Such a curriculum must be broad, balanced and relevant to the children's needs now and in the future. Furthermore, the curriculum should be flexible and capable of being tailored to match the range of individual needs and abilities present in the school at any one time. Thus from year to year the curriculum must both progress and be continuous.

Since July 2004 the school has embraced the "Excellence and Enjoyment" agenda and in doing so is effectively reclaiming the curriculum as our own in order to maximise the learning opportunities we offer our diverse, individual and multi-talented children. This initiative continues to flourish as the school community works together to create a lively, vibrant learning experience which we feel best meets the needs and aspirations of our children.

As a school we are committed to equipping every child with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable them to fulfil their full potential as students, achieving the highest standards possible within the current framework. Our record of achievement as measured by performance in Key Stage 2 National Tests stands favourable comparison with any school in the country. Thus on transfer to the secondary phase of their education, the vast majority of our children, are well prepared to make their mark in an increasingly performance driven environment.

However, whilst we fully endorse this facet of education and the entitlement children have to a thorough grounding in the basics of Speaking, Reading, Writing and Mathematics, we greatly value Education in the wider sense.

For us, the ultimate aim of education is to inspire individuals to realise their potential in ways that serve the common good, to nurture humaneness and Christian decency in a society in development.

School Vision:

Education has a number of seemingly contradictory aims:

- To cherish our Christian beliefs and the inspirational gospel message of Jesus - and knowledge and respect for other religions and faiths;
- To overcome self-centeredness and belief in the right of the strongest – and to inspire strength to stand alone, to stand up, to dissent and not to knuckle under or cave into the opinions of others;
- To develop independent and autonomous personalities – and the ability to function and work as part of a team;
- To allow space for the ways and wont of the young – and to fit them to join in and take on responsibility in the adult world;
- To furnish skills for work and the practical tasks of life – and provide room for emotional and character growth;
- To provide enough facts to be able to fathom and follow current affairs – and to convey values that can guide the choices that new knowledge opens the way for;
- To inspire respect for facts and sound argument – and to train critical abilities to contend with conventional wisdom and challenge existing arrangements;
- To awaken esteem for others efforts and humility for their feats – and to instil enough faith in oneself to dare to fail;
- To provide the young with a solid foundation of knowledge – and mould it in such a way that it impels to enquiry and the quest for new knowledge throughout life;

- To teach children to utilise nature and the forces of nature for human purposes – and teach them to protect the environment against human folly and encroachment.

Education must balance these dual aims. The object is an all round development of abilities and distinctive qualities that gives individuals the strength to take command of their own lives, aspire to high moral standards, take on duties for their society, and care for the living environment.