



# Curriculum – Our thoughts on why it stands out at CCSJ

Art galleries, theatres, museums, local areas, parks and sport venues are all regarded as part of our **school's learning space**

- *In 2014/2015 the whole school (400 chn) went to the National Gallery in London to study one painting; this culminated in all children designing and making their own instillation to display in a gallery for parents.*
- *120 children went to see Joseph and the Technicolour Dream Coat before putting on their own spectacular performance for 400 people.*
- *The whole school went to University Parks and Garden for a picnic and local sight seeing; foundation stage (60 chn) went to the local city park to kick start their bug project, they collected all of the resources needed for building their own bug hotel.*
- *Year 1 visited the local park as part of their locality Oxford topic about parks; they collected information about playground equipment to inform their own park designs.*
- *Each week, a class of Year 4 children, use the fantastic facilities at Oxford Academy as part of the PE curriculum. The last week of summer term 2015 became sports week; where the whole school were introduced to martial arts, they had demonstrations and visited local studios to have a go for themselves.*

Authors and poets visit the school to **enhance learning** in our topics. We make good use of museums and contrasting locations to develop learning in history and geography.

- *In 2014/15 a local author, Matt Brown who wrote, 'Compton Valance' visited and ran writing workshops across the school. In 2015, for Black History Month, we had a poet and writer in school who ran writing workshops across the school and performed his own poems for the children. Additionally in 2016 the author M.P Robertson, who wrote the dragon book series, visited school to run workshops and inspire the children's creativity.*
- *In 2015 the whole of Year 3 visited Didcot Railway steam train museum to inform their investigation; 'How did steam trains affect people's health in the 1800s?' They dressed up in traditional Victorian clothes, to make the experience even more 'real-life'.*
- *In 2015 the whole school visited the Natural History Museum in Oxford to investigate Dinosaurs to enhance the whole school Dinosaur topic.*
- *When learning about transport through time, all children in KS2 visited the transport museum to investigate how modes of transport have developed*



over time.

We use **external expertise** to add to our in-school specialisms. We involve the local historical society in our teaching of local historical sites. We've built a Stone Age cave in the school grounds with traditional craftspeople working alongside children.

- *Church Cowley has been transformed by a host of incredible lanterns which have been created by the children with the help of local artists.*
- *KS1 used the lanterns they made, to transform the stage into a magical, winter wonderland, when performing their nativity in Balliol College's main dining hall*
- *Teachers from Oxford Spires Academy have worked with our teachers and children to develop teachers and pupils' confidence when teaching DT and science*
- *In 2104, a comic artist, Neil Cameron, worked with our children to create their own comic strip, which now sits proudly on the wall of our art/music room*

“We make an **audit of the skills of parents** and use them to help support learning across the curriculum. Our parents share their skills as scientists, nurses, artists and parents. Parents and carers are a great resource for themes such as history and immigration.”

- *In T1 2015/2016 we made use of the skills of a doctor parent during a health topic in Y3. She came to school to give a talk on how practice has changed since the 1800s, and the children got a chance to try out the equipment from her doctor's bag.*
- *We are very lucky to draw on the expertise of parents who are supporting at both our allotment and Forest School sessions.*
- *The final extravaganza in July 2016 will be a 'Church Cowley Carnival' which will celebrate different countries and traditions around the world. We plan on using the expertise of parents (cooking, dancing, storytelling, singing, helping with costumes) to support teachers in making this an incredible and memorable experience for the children.*



We develop life and entrepreneurial skills by having strong links to **business and enterprise**, involving parents as well as teachers.

- *At Church Cowley, we value the importance of preparing our children for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, as a result we have a computing programme that equips the children with the skills they will need to progress in the working world*
- *We have developed an annual enterprise event, which is based around 'The Apprentice' the children work in teams to produce a product to sell at our Christmas Fair. We teach children the skills they will need to succeed in a business such as teamwork, communication, problem solving and critical thinking.*
- *We put great importance on developing children's ability and confidence for public speaking and to be able to communicate effectively.*
- *We provide children with a number of opportunities for public speaking such as; presentations in assembly, school play, curriculum assemblies, storytelling, parents galleries and presentations. All pupils are given a voice and we value their opinions and we want to provide them with a chance to express themselves.*

We have **parents supporting** during the school day. At times parents and children are able to learn together.

- *Every morning, parents are invited into school to support their children in their learning. This is an opportunity for parents to work with children when responding to teacher feedback and consolidating new skills.*
- *We run regular parent workshops, such as phonics workshops, where parents can familiarize themselves with the way in which we teach concepts at school so that they feel confident to support children at home.*

**Older children** support learning of younger pupils. We use, for example, 'hot-seating' of characters from history. We know from research that *children as teachers* and *role-play* can be powerful learning strategies.

- *Our Home School Link Worker has developed a mentor scheme, where older children support younger children in class help them to gain a love of learning and to build their confidence*
- *Year groups often work together, during the Circus topic in July 2015, year 1 were investigating different popcorn flavors before designing their own. They worked with Year 5 providing them with a questionnaire and asking for feedback on their product. They used their feedback to inform and improve their design.*



We work in **partnership** with other schools to share expertise. For example, we have curriculum expertise groups working on a number of specific themes such as grammar, maths and using teacher feedback to develop growth mindsets.

- *Our EYFS team have regular moderation meetings with other schools in our partnership and the local area.*
- *We work closely with other schools in our partnership to develop our practice and to discuss areas for school development*
- *In November 2016 we took part in a partnership INSET with a number of schools from our local areas, to look at developing specific areas such as literacy, homework, and maths*

Our school has been designed around the philosophy of **flexible learning spaces**. All the classrooms can change size, shape and designation to best suit the type of learning we want to stimulate.

- *Our outdoor learning lead has developed the outdoor learning at our school allotment, which is located on the old Church Cowley St James site. Children in KS2 visit weekly to develop skills such as; planting, weeding, harvesting, constructing, woodwork and fire building. Children work towards achieving badges such as the recycling and fire building award.*
- *Every week, 60 children from EYFS visit our Forest School site in Wytham. Our aim is to broaden their horizons, equip them with life skills such as problem solving, woodwork, knowledge of the world around them and to develop their communication skills.*
- *We have designated spaces in school to develop curriculum areas such as our music and art room and our incredibly wacky cow sheds which has become our new library. The library is full of a wide range of stories and non-fiction books that will provide children with incredible facts or whisk them away on exciting adventures.*

**“We believe in rich first hand experiences.**

- *At Church Cowley we value the importance of learning outside the classroom, educational visits are at the center of our school curriculum. We strongly believe that, through providing children with these ‘first hand’ experiences it enables them to become fully immersed in the topic, they are engaged and excited feel confident to express themselves and their ideas.*
- *We believe that through providing children with first hand experiences it enables them to become, responsible citizens, confident individuals and successful learners.*
- *We want to provide children with experiences that will inform their writing*



*and creativity.*

- *We take our pupils on residential trips, including destinations such as Swanage seaside and Warwick castle. As part of our 'Aspirational Curriculum', we took all of the children to have lunch in Balliol College's main dining hall. They study, sketch and photograph things such as the Oxford High St or the works of Monet at the National Gallery, we are even planning to go to the sewerage works with Y2 in 2016. Back at school these resources are used to stimulate work in a variety of media that are then 'displayed' during Shared learning events and Curriculum assemblies.*

We make sure that every topic is launched with a **stimulating event**, involving artists, actors or other experts, to excite and inspire children. We seek to conclude the theme with a memorable performance, exhibition or purposeful activity.

- *As part of our storytelling curriculum we value the importance of providing children with a 'hook' for learning. For example, to begin our circus extravaganza topic we had a whole school assembly where circus performers came to 'wow' the children with their skills and inspire them to have a go. We provided the children with stilts, spinning plates, diablos and juggling balls every playtime. By the end of the topic, children felt confident to put on their own performance in front of the whole school.*
- *We ended off the school year with an incredible 'Circus Extravaganza' on our school field. We had a big top, circus performers, a helter skelter and a host of stalls, games, food and rides.*
- *To hook the children, at the beginning of our dinosaur topic we began by placing a ginormous egg in the middle of the playground, adding a smoke machine and massive bones. The children couldn't wait to get to their classrooms to find out more and discover where it had come from.*
- *We feel that it is important that parents are involved in their children's learning. To give them an insight into what we do in school we put on events such as; curriculum assemblies, history museums, science fairs, plays and performances.*

We adapt the curriculum to respond to **current events** and things happening nationally and locally. In the past we have used events such as the Jubilee and the Olympics to **connect learning to life** beyond the school.

- *In 2015 we had a whole school 'Oxford' topic where the children we immersed in our rich history. All children visited Balliol College and The Natural History Museum; additionally Year 3 visited The High Street, where they interviewed local businesses to investigate how the High Street had changed over time.*



- *In November 2015 we had two weeks of Religious Education where the children visited local religious sites, learnt stories and learnt out how people celebrate in different cultures. They combined this topic with local geography and map work, pinpointing where these sites could be found locally.*
- *Our Geography Lead has sent up links with Nicaragua and is running a club for children in KS2, where they will be communicating with children in Nicaragua and finding out more about their culture.*
- *There are a number of children whose families have experienced tragedy in recent natural disasters across the globe. These children have lead fundraising events such as cake sales to raise money to support.*
- *The whole school is doing a 6 week Olympics Topic in Summer 2016 to tie in with the Olympics in Rio.*