

*“Teachers have strong subject knowledge and they use good questioning techniques to develop pupils’ thinking and extend their learning. The good relationships they have with pupils help to provide a positive learning atmosphere in classrooms” Ofsted 2013*

## The Curriculum

Learning is at the heart of Ryecroft C.E. (C) Middle School and we hope to promote a love of learning within our pupils so understanding how that can be achieved for each individual pupil is something that we aspire to. Our ultimate goal is to help pupils become better learners and prepare them for life in the challenging world of the 21st century. There is need for resourceful, reflective, creative, independent and resilient young people and we aim to build these qualities into our curriculum as an integral part of our commitment to providing the best possible opportunities for our pupils.

Ryecroft C.E. (C) Middle School provides subject-based teaching at both Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6) and Key Stage 3 (Years 7 and 8). Where possible, we aim to provide subject specialists who are well qualified and up to date with all aspects of their subject teaching.

In all years pupils study English; Maths; Science; Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Geography; History; Religious Education; Physical Education; Music; Art; Design Technology and French. In some subjects, pupils are taught in mixed ability classes and in others, such as English and Maths they are taught in ability groups.

ICT is used extensively to enhance learning in most subjects.

The school has good sports facilities and we aim to offer as wide a variety of PE activities.

We also offer an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits to enhance the learning experiences of our pupils.

### English

English is vital for communicating with others in school and in the wider world, and is fundamental to learning in all curriculum subjects.

Our aim is to enable pupils to develop skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing so that they will be able to participate fully in society. Pupils will learn to express themselves creatively and imaginatively and to communicate with others confidently and effectively.

### Mathematics

Mathematics is all around us; it underpins much of our daily lives and our future, both as individuals and collectively. Mathematical understanding is critical to our children’s future. The economic future depends on ensuring more and more children are mathematically literate and mathematically confident. Mathematical understanding underpins science and engineering and it is also the foundation of technological and economic progress.

Pupils are grouped into broadly similar ability groups, with smaller groups for less able children. They are closely

tracked throughout each of their four years to ensure both challenge and consolidation of their mathematical development.

## Science

Our Science teaching offers opportunities for children to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of important scientific ideas, processes and skills and relate these to everyday experiences.
- Learn about ways of thinking and of finding out about and communicating ideas.
- Explore values and attitudes through science.

We have a purpose-built laboratory with the latest interactive whiteboard technology. This gives our Key Stage 2 pupils a huge advantage over those pupils taught at a primary school who do not have access to such impressive resources and facilities.

## Geography

Geography lessons ensure that pupils carry out a series of geographical enquires at different scales. These involve: asking geographical questions, suggesting appropriate sequences of investigation, collecting, recording and presenting evidence, analysing and evaluating evidence, and drawing and justifying conclusions.

They learn a variety of geographical skills: using and building an extended geographical vocabulary, selecting and using appropriate fieldwork techniques, using atlases, globes, OS maps, selecting secondary sources of evidence including photographs, satellite images, GIS and evidence from ICT based resources.

## History

How do you know who you are unless you know where you've come from? How can you tell what's going to happen, unless you know what's happened before? History isn't just about the past. It's about why we are who we are – and about what's next. Ryecroft's pupils study many different aspects of the past, finding out about the social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the societies studied.

Pupils are encouraged to learn the tools of the Historian. To consider significant events, to evaluate change and continuity and to consider different interpretations of the past.

## Religious Education

RE is all about thinking, sometimes described as philosophy.

In RE we learn how to think about difficult questions with a view to finding answers. Therefore, to be good at RE, you need to be curious, patient, determined and thoughtful. We look at ethical issues and debate what is considered to be right and wrong, as well as consider why people make such decisions. To embark on the RE learning journey you need an open mind and an inquisitive nature.

Our aim is to equip all pupils with the relevant skills and confidence to become successful critical thinkers who reach their true potential. Therefore, lessons are delivered in a creative and imaginative way.

RE is all about showcasing other cultures so that pupils can learn and appreciate their own values, attitudes, and beliefs.

## ICT

The increasing use of technology in all aspects of society makes confident, creative and productive use of ICT an essential skill for life. ICT is an exciting subject, providing a variety of practical and challenging learning experiences, which make it reachable for all pupils. The subject gives pupils the opportunity to think and learn whilst developing an interest in the world around them. ICT capability encompasses not only the mastery of technical skills and techniques, but also the understanding of being able to apply these skills purposefully, safely and responsibly in everyday life and employment.

## French

Pupils learn to ask and answer questions orally, to pronounce foreign words accurately and to participate in simple conversations. They learn to understand progressively more difficult pieces spoken and written in the foreign language by following simple strategies. They learn to follow instructions given in the language. They learn to formulate sentences and paragraphs, firstly by following examples and, later, independently. They learn to redraft written work, including the use of ICT and to use ICT programs to learn and consolidate vocabulary. They learn to memorise vocabulary and grammar, to use a bilingual dictionary and to read simple books in French. They gain a deeper understanding of grammar, especially verb tenses.

During the four years at the school pupils cover a wide variety of topics including: numbers, days, months, dates, clothes, colours, asking for and giving directions, asking for items in shops and in restaurants, telling the time, describing their school day, responding politely to enquiries, expressing opinions and talking about sport and leisure, the names of small shops, countries, modes of transport, school subjects, places in a school, gifts and souvenirs and parts of the body.

## Music

The National Curriculum for music is divided into the following key areas:

- **Performing:** pupils sing songs and play instruments developing their control of pitch and rhythm. They practise rehearse and present performances with an awareness of their audience.
- **Composing:** pupils learn how to improvise, developing melodic and rhythmic ideas. They explore, choose and organise musical ideas within musical structures. They produce, develop and extend musical ideas.
- **Listening and appraising:** pupils analyse and compare sounds. They learn how the elements of music can be organised within different structures to communicate different moods and effects.

## Physical Education

All pupils have three, seventy-five minute lessons per fortnight. They will experience many varied activities, taught by a range of teachers, giving them a broad and balanced PE curriculum.

In **Key Stage 2 and 3** all pupils have lessons which include football, touch rugby, netball, hockey, dance, gymnastics, table tennis, athletics, cricket, tennis, rounders and swimming (Y6 only). Both boys and girls experience these activities which we believe gives them a good grounding and basic knowledge to be able to make choices to enjoy many sports in the future.

**Extra-curricular** activities are very important and used to support lesson work. All practices are year group or activity based, therefore giving all pupils, of any ability, the chance to play with others who have the same interests. Outside coaches are used, when available, to support the school staff. We run inter-house competitions throughout the year to give more pupils the chance to play matches and to represent their house.

## Food and Textiles Technology

During the four years pupils investigate different foods and food types to enable them to understand healthy eating. They design menus and create a range of dishes. Some of the work is linked to their studies in other areas of the curriculum (such as the Victorians in History).

As pupils progress through the school the work challenges them to operate individually and as part of a small group so they are able to develop other skills such as co-operation and team working.

With their textile work they cover a range of basic skills which increase in their complexity as they move from hand stitching to sewing machines. Designing items before making helps pupils to make informed choices and think critically about improving the quality of their work.

## Art

Throughout their time at the school, pupils develop their observation and recording skills, increasing their understanding of the visual elements.

They explore a wide range of materials and techniques to develop their understanding of line, tone, texture, colour and pattern, in order to communicate their ideas and make images and artefacts. They compare ideas, methods and approaches used in their own work, with those in art from other periods and cultures. They review, adapt and improve their work to realise their intentions. Emphasis is placed on perseverance and planning.

They research independently, collecting and selecting from visual and other information when developing ideas for their work. They combine and organise visual and tactile elements for different purposes and explore simple perspective and proportion.

Pupils focus on developing their understanding of geometric shapes, line, tone and texture. Pupils explore ideas and assess visual and other information including the work of other artists, cultures and times, analysing their methods and approaches. They manipulate materials and processes imaginatively, adapting and refining their work as it progresses. Opportunities are given for independent and collaborative work.

## Design and Technology

Design is the foundation of our everyday life and shapes the world around us. It is based on designing products and objects. The subject explores the design process and offers pupils the opportunity to develop their design and making skills, in both 2D and 3D visualisation techniques.

The topics the pupils look at are always changing to allow them to keep up to speed with changes in the real world.

During their time at the school pupils will experience working with a range of materials and tools.