Stanwix School

Curriculum policy 2026-2027

Policy owner	Education Standards and Safeguarding committee
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Together we learn, together we grow, together we thrive.

Stanwix Primary School

Curriculum Policy

Our curriculum vision: Belonging • Kindness • Joy • Ambition

1. Curriculum Intent

At Stanwix Primary School, we believe that a great curriculum opens doors.

Our curriculum is designed to give every child the knowledge, vocabulary, skills, experiences and confidence they need to flourish during their time at Stanwix and beyond. We want children to leave our school as successful readers, writers and mathematicians, with a secure understanding of the wider world and a genuine desire to keep learning.

Our curriculum is rooted in our school values of:

- **Belonging** – children know that they are valued members of our school, their community and the wider world.
- **Kindness** – children learn to respect themselves, others and the environment and to contribute positively to the lives of others.
- **Joy** – children experience the pleasure, curiosity and excitement that come from learning, discovering and creating.
- **Ambition** – children develop high aspirations for themselves and understand that effort, perseverance and resilience can help them achieve.

We have high expectations for all pupils. We believe that every child is entitled to a rich, ambitious and carefully sequenced curriculum, regardless of background, starting point or individual need.

Our curriculum is therefore designed to:

- build secure foundations in reading, writing and mathematics;
- develop a rich and purposeful vocabulary;
- build knowledge systematically so that children can increasingly remember and apply what they have learned.
- develop disciplinary skills alongside substantive knowledge;
- provide opportunities for children to apply what they have learned;
- ensure appropriate challenge and support through adaptive teaching;
- develop children's independence, resilience, curiosity and critical thinking;
- Embed educational visits as part of the learning sequence to enrich learning

- provide meaningful opportunities to learn beyond the classroom;
- make strong use of our distinctive local context, including the rich Roman history of our local area and Victorian heritage of the school;
- promote children's personal, social, moral, cultural and physical development;
- nurture a genuine love of reading and learning;
- prepare children successfully for the next stage of their education and for life beyond primary school.

Our curriculum is broad, balanced and ambitious. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum while being deliberately shaped around the needs and context of the children of Stanwix.

2. The Stanwix Curriculum Promise

At Stanwix, we are committed to providing a curriculum that is:

Ambitious – enabling every child to achieve highly from their starting point.

Knowledge-rich – helping pupils develop the knowledge they need to understand the world around them.

Inclusive – ensuring every child belongs, participates and succeeds.

Coherent and well-sequenced – so that new learning builds on what has come before.

Adaptive – responding to pupils' needs while maintaining high expectations.

Rich in vocabulary and language – because language underpins learning across the curriculum.

Rooted in reading – because reading unlocks knowledge, imagination and opportunity.

Connected to real life – helping pupils understand the purpose and relevance of their learning.

Enriched by experience – through educational visits, visitors, wider opportunities and memorable experiences.

Rooted in our community – helping children understand and value the place where they live.

Joyful – fostering curiosity, confidence and a love of learning.

Through this curriculum, we aim to develop children who embody our values of **Ambition, Belonging, Kindness and Joy**, and who are increasingly knowledgeable, confident and prepared for the next stage of their education and life beyond school.

3. . Curriculum Principles

At Stanwix, curriculum design is based on the following principles.

Knowledge matters

Children need a secure body of knowledge on which to build future learning. We carefully identify the essential knowledge, vocabulary and concepts that children need to know and remember.

Learning is sequenced

New learning builds on what children already know. Subject leaders and teachers consider prior learning, identify important connections and carefully sequence knowledge and skills so that children can increasingly work with greater independence and sophistication.

Learning is remembered

We provide opportunities for children to revisit, retrieve and apply previously taught knowledge. We recognise that learning something once is not the same as remembering it over time.

Vocabulary is deliberately developed

Teachers explicitly identify and teach subject-specific vocabulary. Children are given repeated opportunities to hear, use, explain and apply new vocabulary.

All children can learn

We have high expectations for every pupil. Adaptive teaching is used across the curriculum so that barriers to learning are reduced without lowering expectations. Teachers adapt explanations, questioning, scaffolding, resources, tasks, groupings and levels of support in response to pupils' needs.

Experiences enrich learning

Visits, visitors, practical experiences and opportunities beyond the classroom are not viewed as additional activities. Wherever possible, they are deliberately planned as part of the sequence of learning and provide an opportunity to deepen, apply or extend classroom learning.

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum

Reading enables children to access the wider curriculum, develop vocabulary, build knowledge and experience worlds beyond their own. We therefore prioritise both reading attainment and a love of reading.

4. English

Reading

We want every child at Stanwix to become a confident, fluent and enthusiastic reader.

Our reading curriculum combines systematic teaching of decoding and fluency with explicit teaching of comprehension, vocabulary and a rich programme of reading for pleasure.

The National Curriculum identifies both word reading and comprehension as essential dimensions of reading and emphasises the importance of developing the habit of reading widely and often for pleasure and information.

Early reading and phonics

In Reception and Year 1, children follow Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised as our systematic synthetic phonics programme.

Phonics teaching is systematic, cumulative and carefully sequenced. Children are taught to apply their developing phonics knowledge to decode words and read books matched to their phonic knowledge.

In the early stages, children develop accuracy, confidence and automaticity through repeated reading.

The Teaching of Reading

Reading provision is carefully sequenced from early phonics and decoding towards fluent, confident and independent reading. As pupils progress through the school, increasing emphasis is placed on automaticity, expression, pace, vocabulary and deep understanding of texts.

Reception and Year 1
Daily Little Wandle systematic phonics teaching, alongside three weekly reading practice sessions focused on decoding, prosody and comprehension.

Year 2
In Year 2, children continue with Little Wandle decodable books in three times weekly sessions and are assessed for the fluency programme, once they have read phase 5 set 5 books for 5 weeks. The children then receive 3 fluency reading sessions weekly. Alongside this they are taught daily phonics and spelling. Children who require additional support are supported with their phonics through daily Rapid Catch up 7+ Little Wandle phonics lessons.

Years 3 and 4
Little Wandle Fluency approaches are used three times each week to develop **accuracy, automaticity, pace and expression**. In addition, pupils have **two dedicated whole-class comprehension sessions each week**, developing vocabulary, retrieval, inference, prediction, explanation and wider comprehension skills. Children who require additional support are provided with Rapid Catch up 7+ Little Wandle phonics lessons.

Years 5 and 6
Pupils follow the **Ready Steady Read** approach daily, continuing to develop fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and confidence through increasingly challenging and diverse texts.

Assessment is used to identify pupils who are not yet reading fluently and to ensure that support is timely, appropriate and precisely targeted. Children are provided with reading fluency interventions when assessments identify that they would benefit from extra fluency sessions.

Additional Reading Support

Keep-up Support
Provided for pupils who require short-term intervention to remain in line with age-related expectations and keep pace with their peers.

Catch-up Support
Provided for pupils identified as requiring more structured and sustained intervention to address gaps in learning and accelerate progress.

Fluency Groups
Where assessment identifies a need, pupils take part in additional fluency groups to develop decoding, accuracy, automaticity and reading confidence alongside their daily reading and comprehension provision.

Reading for Pleasure

We want children to become readers because they enjoy reading, not simply because they have been taught to read. Reading for pleasure is a crucial part of our curriculum and plays an important role in developing vocabulary, knowledge, imagination, wellbeing and a lifelong love of reading.

Across the school, we promote reading for pleasure through:

- adults reading aloud to children every day;

- carefully chosen class texts which expose pupils to high-quality literature;
- regular opportunities for children to talk about, recommend and discuss books;
- a well-stocked and welcoming school library;
- access to a wide range of authors, genres, cultures and perspectives;
- opportunities for children to choose and read books independently;
- adults modelling positive reading habits and enthusiasm for books;
- regular book fairs and reading events;
- reading for pleasure book clubs in Key Stage 2;
- celebrating reading through classroom displays, recommendations and shared reading experiences.

We believe every child should experience the pleasure of becoming absorbed in a story, learning something new from a non-fiction text, or discovering an author they are excited to read again. Through these experiences, we aim to develop confident readers who choose to read for both enjoyment and information throughout their lives.

5. Writing

We want children to become confident writers who can communicate effectively, accurately and creatively for a range of purposes and audiences. Writing is taught through a consistent, structured approach that supports pupils to develop ideas, craft language and communicate effectively for a range of purposes and audiences.

Writing is taught explicitly and systematically. Children are taught to:

- speak and rehearse ideas before writing;
- develop vocabulary and sentence structures;
- plan, draft and improve their work;
- write for genuine purposes and audiences;
- develop knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling;
- apply their reading experiences to their own writing;
- write accurately and fluently;
- develop an increasingly sophisticated personal voice.

Handwriting

Handwriting is taught daily until children are fluent and legible.

We recognise that fluent handwriting supports children's ability to communicate their ideas effectively. Teaching develops correct letter formation, appropriate joins where applicable, consistency, presentation and increasing speed and automaticity.

Once handwriting is secure, pupils continue to practise and refine their presentation through regular opportunities to write at length. We use the little wandle scheme for handwriting in Reception and year 1 and will begin introducing it into Year 2 shortly. This will be gradually phased into school to replace our current handwriting scheme, Morrells.

Spelling

Spelling is taught through regular, timetabled sessions.

Teaching is systematic and cumulative, with children explicitly taught spelling patterns, rules, common exception words and strategies for remembering and applying spelling knowledge.

Spelling is reinforced through writing across the curriculum so that pupils increasingly apply taught patterns independently.

6. Mathematics

We want every child to become a confident mathematician who understands mathematical concepts, can reason mathematically and can apply their knowledge to unfamiliar problems.

Our mathematics curriculum is underpinned by the principles of mastery. Children develop secure understanding before moving on, with opportunities to represent, explain, reason and make connections.

Mastering Number

Mastering Number is used in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 to develop strong foundations in number sense, fluency and mathematical reasoning.

The approach has now been introduced into Key Stage 2, strengthening continuity and progression in children's understanding of number.

White Rose Mathematics

White Rose Maths supports curriculum planning from Years 1–6.

It provides a coherent structure and progression, but it is used as a resource rather than being regarded as the curriculum itself. Teachers adapt learning in response to pupils' prior knowledge, misconceptions and needs.

Manipulatives and representations

We place a strong emphasis on the use of concrete manipulatives and mathematical representations.

Children are supported to move between:

concrete → pictorial → abstract

Manipulatives are not simply resources for younger pupils or children who find mathematics difficult. They are valuable mathematical tools that help pupils understand structure, make connections and explain their thinking.

Mathematical thinking

Across the school, children are expected to:

- reason mathematically;
- explain their thinking;
- use appropriate mathematical vocabulary;
- make connections between concepts;
- solve problems;
- identify and correct misconceptions;
- apply mathematics in unfamiliar contexts;
- develop increasing independence and confidence.

Adaptive teaching ensures that pupils receive appropriate scaffolding and challenge while maintaining ambitious mathematical expectations.

7. Science

At Stanwix, science nurtures children's natural curiosity about the world around them and supports our vision that, together we learn, together we grow and together we thrive. Through practical investigation, enquiry and discussion, children develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to understand the world and their place within it.

Our science curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced by the subject leader and is underpinned by the National Curriculum. It identifies:

- essential scientific knowledge;
- progression in scientific concepts;
- progression in scientific vocabulary;
- progression in scientific enquiry;
- opportunities for practical investigation; and
- links between units and prior learning.

Children are taught to ask questions, make observations, identify patterns, perform tests, gather and record evidence, draw conclusions and communicate scientific ideas. Scientific vocabulary is explicitly taught and revisited so that pupils can increasingly explain concepts accurately and confidently.

Practical experiences are purposeful and directly connected to the scientific knowledge and enquiry skills being taught. Children learn to recognise the importance of science in understanding the world around them and its contribution to everyday life and future innovation, fostering the school's values of Ambition, Belonging, Kindness and Joy. Teachers use ongoing assessment to inform teaching and monitor pupils' developing scientific knowledge, understanding and enquiry skills.

8. Foundation Subjects

Our foundation curriculum provides children with a rich body of knowledge, vocabulary and disciplinary skills across history, geography, art and design, design and technology, computing, music, physical education, languages, religious education and other areas of learning.

High-quality published schemes and resources are used to support planning and delivery where appropriate. However, a scheme does not define our curriculum. Published schemes provide a starting point rather than an endpoint.

Subject leaders evaluate resources against the National Curriculum, our school vision and values, and the needs of Stanwix pupils. As part of the school's ongoing curriculum development work, leaders identify and map:

- the essential knowledge pupils need to retain;
- key subject-specific vocabulary;
- disciplinary skills;
- progression across year groups;
- links to prior and future learning;
- opportunities for meaningful application; and

- opportunities to make connections between subjects.

This ensures that learning is coherent, ambitious and increasingly precise, while enabling pupils to develop secure knowledge, skills and understanding over time. Through a broad curriculum, pupils are supported to embody our values of Ambition, Belonging, Kindness and Joy as they learn more about themselves, their community and the wider world. This work remains a key area of development within the school's curriculum improvement priorities.

9. Our Local Context

At Stanwix, we believe children should develop a strong understanding of both the wider world and the community in which they live. Our curriculum is deliberately rooted in our local context, helping pupils understand where they belong and how their local area connects to national and global themes.

We make purposeful use of the rich learning opportunities available within and beyond our immediate community. These include our position within a historic Roman settlement, our Victorian school building, the River Eden, the city of Carlisle, the Solway Coast and the landscapes of the Lake District National Park.

Where appropriate, pupils investigate and learn from:

- local history and heritage;
- Roman history and its continuing influence on our area;
- local geographical features and environments;
- the River Eden, Solway Coast and wider Cumbrian landscape;
- local buildings, landmarks and places of significance;
- local community organisations, businesses and expertise; and
- how our local area has changed over time.

By connecting learning to real places, people and experiences, we help children develop a sense of **Belonging**, foster curiosity about the world around them and ensure they leave Stanwix with a strong understanding of both their local community and their place within the wider world.

10. Educational Visits and Visitors

Educational visits and visitors are carefully planned to enhance, enrich and extend the curriculum.

They are not treated as isolated enrichment activities. Wherever possible, visits and visitors are deliberately positioned within a sequence of learning so that pupils can:

learn → experience → apply → reflect

A visit may introduce a new concept, provide first-hand experience, deepen existing knowledge, develop vocabulary, create an authentic context for enquiry or enable children to apply classroom learning in meaningful ways.

Visitors bring expertise, experiences and perspectives into school and provide opportunities for pupils to ask questions, communicate their understanding and connect learning to the wider world. Examples may include scientists, historians, artists, authors, local experts and other specialist visitors whose expertise enhances curriculum delivery.

The school takes ambitious advantage of its local context while also ensuring pupils experience places, environments and cultures beyond their immediate community. Educational visits are progressively planned and mapped across the curriculum so that pupils encounter a broad range of experiences throughout their time at Stanwix.

An Assistant Headteacher has strategic responsibility for educational visits and oversees the planning and coordination of the programme. Pupils regularly participate in curriculum-linked visits and experiences, including local studies, city visits, outdoor learning opportunities and experiences further afield where appropriate.

These are chosen because they strengthen curriculum knowledge, develop subject-specific skills and help make learning memorable and meaningful. This approach supports our vision that together we learn, together we grow and together we thrive, while promoting our values of Ambition, Belonging, Kindness and Joy.

11. Adaptive Teaching and Inclusion

At Stanwix, we believe that high expectations and inclusion go hand in hand. We aim for every pupil to access and succeed within a broad and ambitious curriculum, while recognising that pupils may require different levels of support, adaptation or challenge to achieve this.

Teachers use their knowledge of pupils to identify barriers to learning and respond appropriately through approaches such as:

- explicit modelling;
- carefully structured explanations;
- worked examples;

- targeted questioning;
- additional practice and retrieval;
- visual and concrete representations;
- vocabulary support;
- scaffolding and pre-teaching;
- flexible grouping;
- targeted adult support; and
- appropriate challenge and extension.

As part of the school's ongoing improvement work, leaders continue to strengthen adaptive teaching and inclusive classroom practice so that support is increasingly effective, consistent and promotes independence. Where appropriate, pupils receive additional support through the school's graduated response and wider inclusion provision. This reflects our commitment to ensuring that all pupils feel they belong, participate fully and can thrive within school life.

12. Curriculum Enrichment

We believe that learning extends beyond the classroom. Educational visits, visitors, enrichment activities and wider opportunities help bring learning to life, broaden experiences and strengthen pupils' understanding of themselves and the wider world.

Through the curriculum and wider school life, pupils are given opportunities to:

- participate in clubs and enrichment activities;
- develop interests and talents;
- experience the arts, sport and physical activity;
- learn beyond the classroom;
- meet visitors and experts;
- take part in educational visits;
- contribute to the school and local community; and
- develop leadership, responsibility and independence.

We continue to strengthen the coherence of our wider offer, ensuring opportunities are increasingly planned to complement curriculum learning and support pupils' personal development. These experiences contribute to pupils' confidence, character, sense of

belonging and understanding of the wider world, supporting our values of Ambition, Belonging, Kindness and Joy.

13. Curriculum Leadership

Subject leaders work alongside senior leaders to develop, monitor and refine curriculum provision within their subjects. They identify essential knowledge, vocabulary and skills, consider progression, evaluate resources, support colleagues and contribute to ongoing curriculum review and improvement.

As part of the school's current curriculum priority, subject leaders are continuing to refine progression, identify the most important learning pupils should retain and strengthen consistency across subjects. This work helps ensure that published schemes support, rather than define, the Stanwix curriculum.

14. Assessment and Impact

Assessment is used to support learning, inform teaching and help pupils make progress through the curriculum. Teachers use a range of approaches, including questioning, discussion, observation, retrieval activities, pupils' work and subject-specific assessment where appropriate.

Assessment information helps teachers identify what pupils know, understand and can do, while informing support, challenge and future learning.

The school's approach to assessment is set out in the Assessment Policy.

The impact of our curriculum is seen in pupils' growing knowledge, understanding and vocabulary, their ability to apply learning and make connections over time, and their increasing confidence and readiness for the next stage of their education.