

PE Policy

St Matthew's Catholic Primary School



Written September 2026

Review Date

Vision and Aims

At St Matthew's, Physical Education (PE) develops the whole child—physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. Rooted in our Catholic mission, we want every child to experience the joy of movement, build physical competence, and develop a lifelong love of sport and healthy living. We want all children to recognize that perseverance, teamwork, resilience, and fair play are central to personal growth and success. We maintain high expectations for all pupils, including those with SEND, pupils learning English, and those facing disadvantage, ensuring every child can participate, succeed, and flourish.

Through our PE curriculum, we aim for children to:

- Master fundamental movement skills (FMS) and progress to complex physical activities and tactical play.
- Build physical fitness, stamina, agility, balance, and coordination.
- Understand the importance of physical activity, healthy eating, and mental well-being in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
- Embody Catholic social values of respect, stewardship, sportsmanship, and inclusion through competitive and collaborative play.

Progression in PE

By the end of Year 6, pupils should have secure foundations in fundamental movement skills, execute complex techniques fluently across various sports, apply tactical reasoning, and evaluate their own and others' performances. Our curriculum follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework in Reception and the National Curriculum for England in Years 1 to 6.

EYFS (Reception): The journey begins in Reception, where children explore movement through active play, structured outdoor exploration, and physical activities. They develop gross motor skills such as running, jumping, hopping, skipping, climbing, and balancing, while refining fine motor control. Children explore space awareness, learn to change direction safely, and manipulate objects (throwing, catching, kicking, rolling). Adults frequently revisit these core movement patterns so children build confidence, spatial awareness, and body control.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2): Teaching builds directly on EYFS foundations. Children extend their fundamental movement skills, mastering agility, balance, and coordination both individually and with partners. They apply these skills in simple competitive and cooperative games (invasion, net/wall, striking/fielding), create and perform basic dance sequences, and explore body positions in gymnastics. Pupils learn simple tactics for attacking and defending and begin to articulate how their bodies feel during physical activity.

Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 & 4): Pupils refine and combine physical techniques in modified team games (such as netball, football, tag rugby, cricket, and tennis). They develop flexibility, strength, technique, control, and balance through gymnastics and dance. Children learn the principles of attacking and defending, work collaboratively in team situations, and begin swimming lessons to attain water confidence and safe stroke mechanics.

Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 & 6): Pupils apply advanced physical skills and tactical awareness in full team games and outdoor adventurous activities (OAA). They design, refine, and perform complex dance and gymnastics routines. Pupils analyze their own and others' performances, using clear sports-specific terminology to offer constructive feedback. By the end of Year 6, pupils meet or exceed the national curriculum requirement to swim at least 25 metres competently, use a range of strokes effectively, and perform safe self-rescue.

Curriculum Design and Planning

EYFS and Key Stage 1:

In Reception and Key Stage 1, physical development focuses on mastering fundamental movement skills, spatial awareness, bodily control, and simple game strategies. Physical activity in EYFS is embedded across indoor and outdoor provision, supported by dedicated adult-led PE sessions. In KS1, lessons are structured around fundamental skill progression—focusing on agility, balance, coordination, movement with equipment, and cooperative team challenges.

Key Stage 2:

In Key Stage 2, the curriculum transitions into specific sport units, gymnastics, creative dance, swimming, and outdoor adventurous activities (OAA). Units are sequenced to build on prior movement mechanics and tactical understanding:

Invasion Games: Football, Netball, Basketball, Tag Rugby, Hockey.

Striking & Fielding: Cricket, Rounders.

Net & Wall Games: Tennis, Badminton.

Aesthetic & Creative: Gymnastics, Thematic Dance.

Athletics: Running (sprints and stamina), Jumping (distance and height), Throwing (accuracy and power).

Swimming & Water Safety: Delivered in designated blocks during KS2 to ensure statutory standards are met.

Outdoor & Adventurous Activities (OAA): Teambuilding, orienteering, and problem-solving activities.

Subject progression plans identify the core physical skills, tactical concepts, safety rules, and sporting vocabulary that build incrementally from Reception to Year 6.

Strong foundations in Physical Literacy

In Reception, children develop physical literacy through purposeful play, structured outdoor environments, interactive physical challenges, and explicit skill instruction. They explore spatial boundaries, learn to control their balance, and handle objects using fine and gross motor movements. These physical foundations continue throughout the school through daily active routines and high-quality PE lessons.

Adults model clear terminology (e.g., balance, coordination, spatial awareness, stance, trajectory, agility) and give children time to observe, demonstrate, and discuss movement. Visual demonstrations, peer modeling, physical prompts, and clear visual task cards support understanding. Where instructions involve complex rules or multi-step activities, teachers break tasks down and demonstrate each stage visually to ensure full comprehension before practice begins.

Teaching and learning the St Matthew's Way

Lessons follow the St Matthew's Way: teachers establish what pupils already know and can do, introduce precise physical vocabulary and the lesson goal, model new techniques, check understanding, provide guided and independent practice, and use feedback to guide the next phase of learning. The gradual "I do, we do, you do" approach helps pupils master physical movements with confidence and autonomy:

Stage	Teacher Action	Pupil Action
I Do	Explains key concepts, demonstrates ideal technique, highlights safety and common errors.	Observes active demonstration, notices key biomechanics, listens to vocabulary.
We Do	Guides whole-class practice at a controlled pace, offers live verbal feedback and corrections.	Practises skills in pairs or small groups, rehearses movement patterns.
You Do	Sets structured challenges, small-sided games, or performance tasks.	Applies skills independently, makes tactical decisions, self-evaluates performance.

Teacher explanations are concise and energetic, leaving substantial time for active movement and practical trial. Non-verbal whistles, hand signals, and clear stop-and-listen routines maintain safety and calm transitions. Mixed-ability pairings and collaborative groups offer opportunities for peer coaching, modeling, and shared problem-solving.

Teachers use variation in drills—altering space, equipment size, task constraints, or team numbers—so pupils notice how changes impact speed, control, and strategy. Questions such as "How can you adjust your body position to increase balance?", "Can you show me a different way to pass past a defender?", and "What worked well in that transition?" encourage pupils to reflect deeply on physical execution.

Inclusion and adaptation

At St Matthew's high ambitions in PE apply to all pupils, made accessible through responsive teaching and adaptive practice. Using the STEP framework (Space, Task, Equipment, People), teachers modify activities to ensure every child participates fully and encounters appropriate challenge:

Space: Adjust court or field dimensions, targets, or zones to modify movement demands.

Task: Adapt rules, simplify movement patterns, break down skills into steps, or offer alternative scoring systems.

Equipment: Use balls of varying sizes, weights, textures, or colours; modify bats, rackets, or visual markers to lower physical barriers.

People: Adjust group sizes, alter defender-to-attacker ratios, or assign specific roles (e.g., peer coach, referee, partner guide).

Pupils learning English benefit from visual demonstrations, physical modeling, visual cue cards, and clear sporting terminology. Teachers ensure adaptations remove physical or cognitive barriers without lowering expectations or reducing enjoyment.

Assessment and responsive teaching

Teachers assess prior physical capabilities through warm-up observations, informal skill audits, and baseline movement tasks. During lessons, teachers use continuous observation, targeted questioning, live feedback, and peer demonstrations to gauge execution and tactical awareness.

Teachers anticipate common movement errors (e.g., incorrect foot placement when throwing, rushing a jump, or lack of spatial awareness) and adapt coaching points immediately. Live feedback allows pupils to correct techniques on the spot. Mini-plenaries are used mid-lesson to pause, highlight good practice, clarify misconceptions, and challenge pupils further.

End-of-unit assessments record attainment against National Curriculum expectations across three domains:

Head (Cognitive): Tactical understanding, rules, evaluation, and decision-making.

Heart (Social/Emotional): Respect, leadership, sportsmanship, resilience, and fair play.

Hands (Physical): Motor skills, stamina, control, technique, and fitness execution.

Assessment is used purposefully to inform future curriculum planning, targeted interventions, and talent identification, avoiding unnecessary administrative burden on teachers.

Personal development and Building the Kingdom

Physical Education at St Matthew's extends far beyond physical skill; it nurtures character, moral development, and spiritual growth. In alignment with Catholic social teaching, PE promotes human dignity, solidarity, community, and stewardship:

Sportsmanship & Respect: Children learn to win with humility, accept defeat gracefully, respect referees and opponents, and value the gifts of every individual.

Healthy Living & Stewardship: Children are taught to care for their bodies as gifts from God, understanding the importance of physical fitness, nutrition, and mental health.

Community & Competition: Inter-house sports days, local Catholic cluster competitions, and school games events allow pupils to celebrate shared talents, build community spirit, and represent the school with pride.

Inclusion & Service: Pupils take on leadership roles as Sports Champions or Playground Leaders, serving their peers by facilitating inclusive play during break times.

Leadership monitoring and review

Class teachers and specialized PE coaches plan, deliver, adapt, and assess PE lessons, ensuring active participation and safety. We recognize the vital role of strong subject leadership in driving high standards across the physical curriculum.

Allocated subject leadership time allows the PE Subject Leader to:

Conduct learning walks, observe active lessons, and monitor curriculum coverage across all key stages.

Review skill progression, equipment provision, and safety compliance across all sports units.

Provide coaching, team-teaching, and ongoing professional development (CPD) for teaching staff.

Manage the effective allocation of the PE and Sport Premium funding to maximize sustainable impact.

Regularly report to senior leaders and school Governors regarding standards, swimming outcomes, extra-curricular engagement, and competitive participation.

Findings from monitoring inform annual PE action plans, staff training, resource allocation, and curriculum updates.

Working with families

Year group physical activity targets, PE timetables, and curriculum overviews are shared regularly with parents and carers. We actively encourage families to foster healthy, active lifestyles at home through walking to school, community sports participation, and active outdoor family pursuits.

The PE Subject Leader hosts annual sports days, family active events, and workshops providing practical guidance on physical well-being, healthy routines, and local sports club links. Parents are regularly informed of pupils' sporting achievements and participation in extra-curricular teams.

Homework

At St Matthew's, physical homework focuses on embedding active habits and supporting physical literacy outside of school hours:

Community Sport Links: Encouraging attendance at local sports and swimming clubs, swimming clubs, park runs, and community physical activities.

Health & Well-being Tasks: Simple research tasks linked to nutrition, bodily hydration, sleep hygiene, and personal fitness goals during upper key stage units.

These activities reinforce physical learning from PE lessons and encourage lifelong healthy behaviors.

Related guidance

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework

National Curriculum in England: PE programmes of study (Key Stages 1 & 2)

AfPE (Association for Physical Education) Safe Practice in Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity

St Matthew's Safeguarding, Assessment, and SEND Policies