

Maple Tree Lower School

Curriculum planning

We teach our curriculum wherever possible through a thematic topic (eg The Romans). We find children quickly become enthusiastic about the topic and we can capture that enthusiasm to develop subject specific skills in a purposeful way. It also enables children to see the connections between the different subject areas and puts learning into a real context for them.

We aim that every topic starts with a really interesting event and includes visits or visitors to bring the learning to life.

As we have mixed age classes, we have a rolling programme of themes in order that children do not meet the same learning experiences as they move through the school.

Mathematics.

Our core teaching in Mathematics follows the Abacus Evolve scheme published by Pearson. We believe that using a scheme ensures a structured progression of maths skills with a consistent approach from year 1 to year 4. The published scheme includes active problem solving as well as book-work and our teachers supplement the scheme with a variety of activities and resources which make the maths learning more lively and connect it with real life experiences. We place a strong emphasis on the learning of key maths facts (addition and subtraction of numbers to 20, and multiplication facts to 10 x 10) and we ask parents to help with homework practice to ensure that children have instant recall of these facts which they will need for more advanced problem solving.

Literacy

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening skills are developed as an integral part of our learning in all subjects. Through our topic work we ensure that children's vocabulary is developed.

Use of talk partners enables children to practice talk and dialogue for learning. We use drama particularly to explore different types of talk and our 'Talk for Writing' curriculum involves children in learning and retelling stories.

Reading

Reading in school starts with a phonic based approach to learning to read. Our reception children enjoy learning the corresponding sound (or phoneme) for each letter through the use of 'Letters and Sounds' to ensure that children achieve mastery of all their sounds for reading in years 1 and 2. The 'Jolly Phonics' approach, which uses rhymes, songs and actions to ensure the learning is fast and fun is used particularly in the foundation stage to supplement the learning.

Reading books are carefully graded with reading based on texts at an appropriate level for the child's decoding skills. We do not have one specific scheme but rather a mixture of books which are colour graded according to the 'Book Bands for Guided Reading' system.

Reading comprehension also starts from the very beginning with guided reading sessions to explore understanding.

Once children have learned to reliably decode print, guided group reading continues throughout Key stage 2 to explore the skills of:

- skimming and scanning texts to find information
- a deeper level of understanding using inference and deduction
- an appreciation of themes.

We encourage a love of reading through the reading of stories regularly in class as well as a daily quiet or shared reading time.

Writing

In the earliest stages children are encouraged to breakdown the sounds they hear in words and use their phonic skills to write them as part of their daily phonics sessions.

They are taught correct letter formation using the 'Nelson' handwriting scheme and encouraged to have-a-go at writing in a variety of 'play' settings as well as in guided groups with the teacher.

We use class topic work as a focus for reading and writing activities. Our children enjoy writing because of our commitment to a 'Talk for Writing' approach which means that children have had lots of oral rehearsal before writing and so feel confident and clear about the content of their writing before they start.

We ensure that children have a variety of purposes and contexts for their writing, including Newspaper reports, letters, diaries, reports, biographies, instructions, persuasion, discussion and recounts.

Spelling skills and strategies are taught weekly. Children are expected to master the spelling of the main key words by the end of Year 2. Parents are asked to help children with learning spellings at home as part of homework.

Science

We use the national curriculum as a basis for developing our science which is incorporated into our thematic approach. Children learn to develop scientific skills through planning, carrying out and evaluating regular investigations as well as learning about the important science concepts and knowledge.

Computing

Computing is an integral part of learning in school we use classroom computers, i-pads and a bank of wireless networked laptops for research, presentation and communication. Skills are developed systematically through weekly dedicated computing lessons .

History and Geography

These subjects are taught thematically through our different topics, some of which will be specifically history or geography focussed. The content of these subjects are guided by the national curriculum.

Religious Education

We follow the Bedfordshire agreed syllabus for RE in common with all other maintained schools in the County. This ensures a rich mix of learning about Christianity and other World Religions through themes. Sometimes elements of the RE syllabus can be met through our topic work but generally this subject is taught specifically.

Personal, Social, Moral and Health education

Weekly lessons explore feelings, social situations and aspirations through circle time, drama and group activities. We have a whole school planned curriculum which includes progressive and age appropriate learning about drugs as medicine, relationship education within a familial setting etc.

Music

Weekly music sessions develop children's sense of rhythm, timing and pitch through listening and composition activities based on the 'Music Express' scheme of work. We have a wide variety of instruments in school. Children develop singing skills and a love of singing as part of their music lessons. They regularly sing in assemblies.

Art

Art is incorporated into our thematic learning. Children are taught a range of skills using a variety of media. These skills are then utilised to create a range of art work tailored to the topic and may include sketching, painting, printing, sculpting etc.

Design Technology

Our design Technology curriculum is linked to our topic and science work. Children practice a range of techniques and skills including cutting, shaping and combining a range of materials. As in art, these DT skills will be used to create a range of outcomes relevant to the topic.

Modern Foreign Language

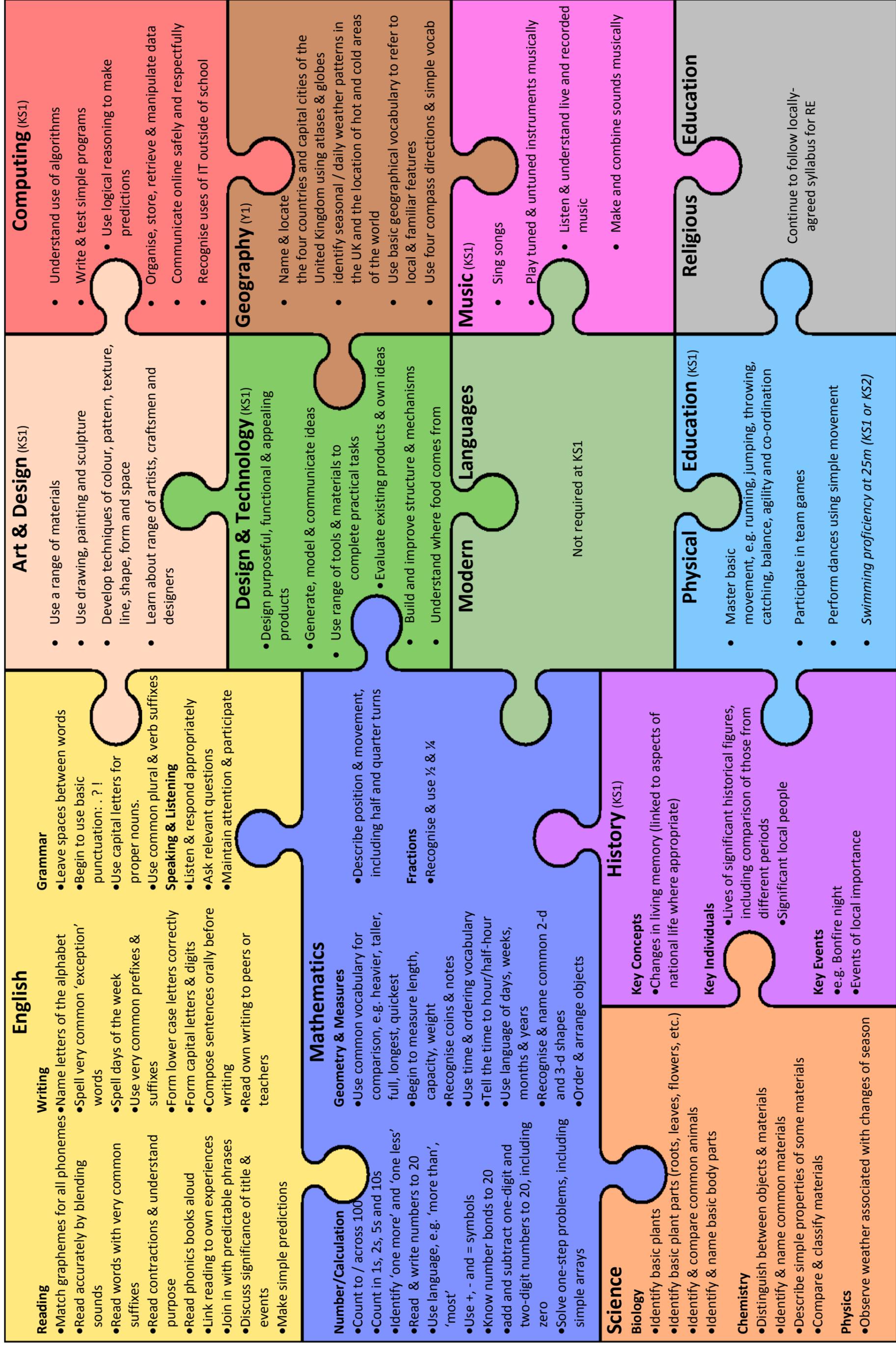
In key stage 2 children begin a more structured approach learning French vocabulary and conversational language. They also learn about French culture through eating French food, learning French songs and reading French books.

Physical Education

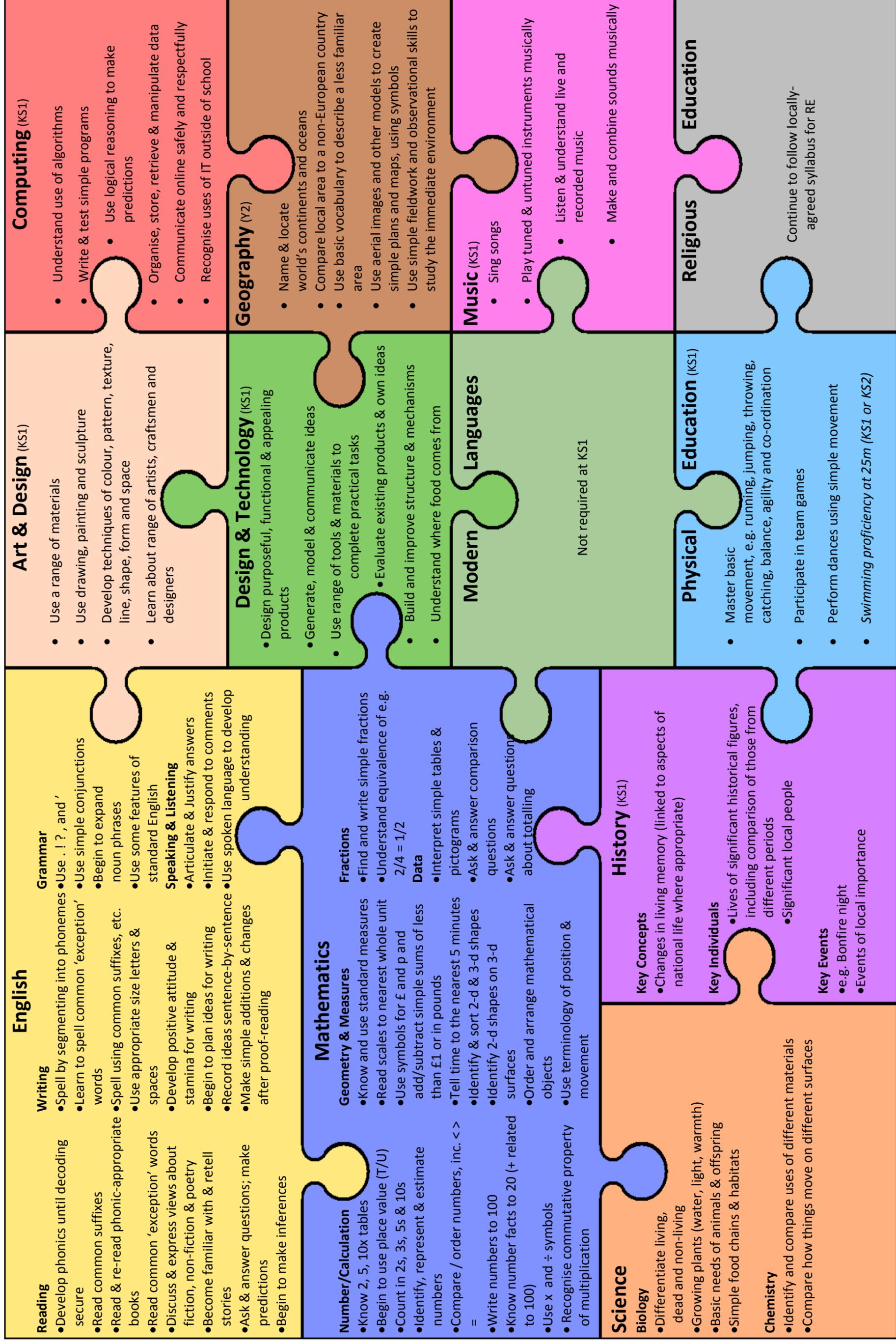
All children participate in regular PE sessions each week. The children experience a range of PE skills including gymnastics, athletics, ball skills, team games and dance. Through our sports premium funding all children from year 1 to year 4 receive tennis coaching. Swimming is taught in KS2.

At Maple Tree Lower School we use the new national curriculum which came into force in September 2014 as a basis for the development of our creative curriculum. The requirements of the new national curriculum are shown in the following pages.

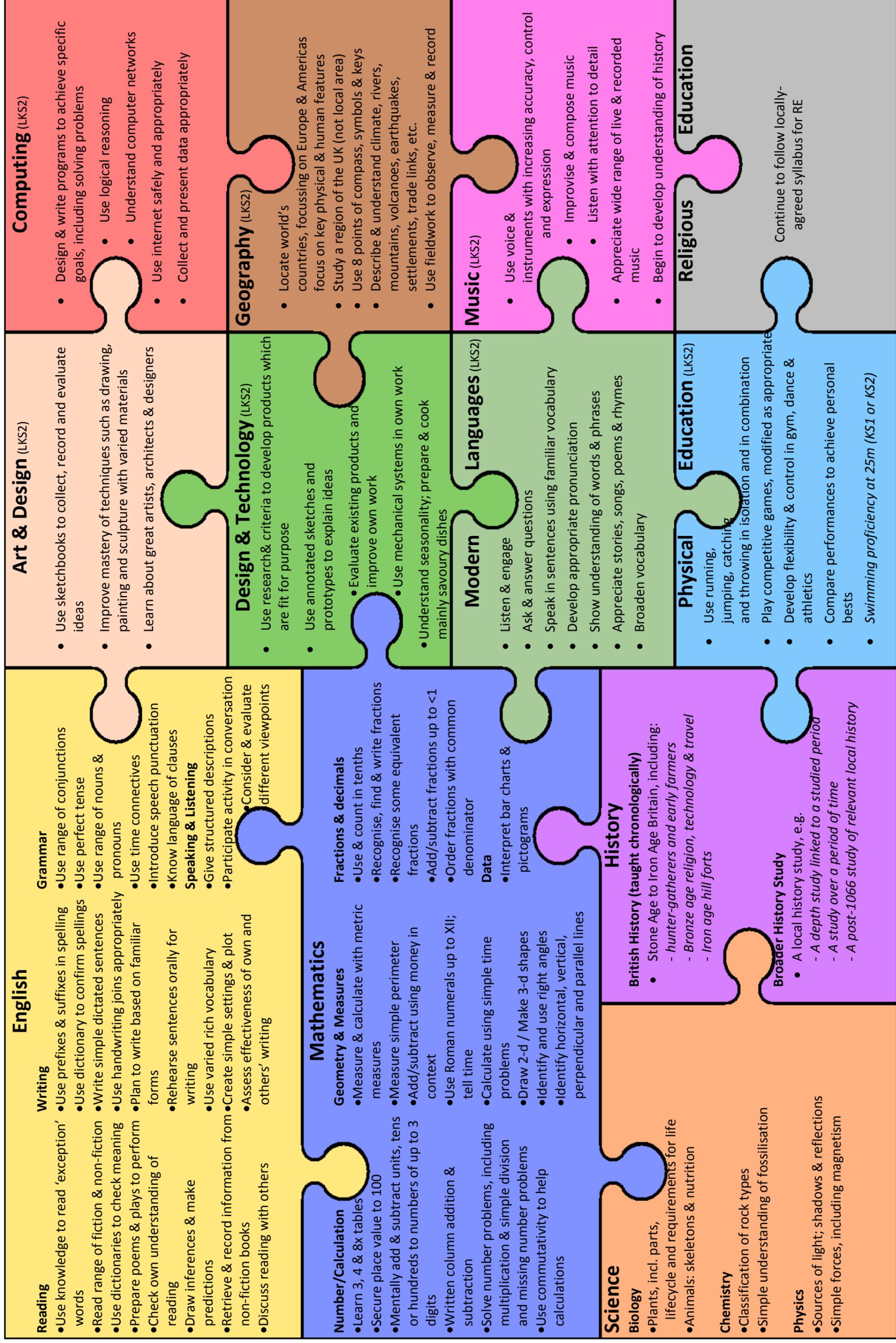
Curriculum Overview for Year 1



Curriculum Overview for Year 2



Curriculum Overview for Year 3



Curriculum Overview for Year 4

