

The background features three blue circles of varying sizes and two thin blue lines. One line runs diagonally from the top left towards the center, and another runs diagonally from the top right towards the bottom right. The circles are positioned in the upper and lower right areas of the page.

# **Whartons Primary School Curriculum Policy**

**Date of Policy: Nov 2020**

**Member(s) of staff Responsible: Teaching and  
Learning Governing Committee**

**Review Date: Nov 2021**

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## 1. Curriculum aims, principles and Intent

We believe that:

1. Learning is a change in long term memory
2. Our aims are to ensure that our pupils experience a wide and balanced breadth of study and have, by the end of each key stage, long term memory of an ambitious body of disciplinary and substantive knowledge. (Understanding and skills)

Our curriculum aims/intends to:

- Provide a broad and balanced education for all pupils that's coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge for skills and future learning and employment
- Enable pupils to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations
- Support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Support pupils' physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active
- Promote a positive attitude towards learning
- Ensure equal access to learning for all pupils, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support
- Have a high academic/vocational/technical ambition for all pupils
- Equip pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life
- Promote the learning and development of our youngest children and ensure they are ready for Key Stage 1

### Curriculum Intent model

- 1. **Curriculum drivers** shape our curriculum breadth. They are derived from an exploration of the backgrounds of our pupils, our beliefs about high quality education and our values. They are used to ensure we give our pupils appropriate and ambitious curriculum opportunities.
- 2. **Cultural capital** gives our pupils the vital background knowledge required to be informed and thoughtful members of our community who understand and believe in British values. The utilisation of ambitious text, complex and higher level vocabulary alongside enriched experiences, woven through all aspects of the curriculum, will support the development of all children's cultural capital.

- 3. **Curriculum breadth** is shaped by our curriculum drivers, cultural capital, subject topics and our ambition for pupils to study the best of what has been thought and said by many generations of academics and scholars.
- 4. Our curriculum distinguishes between **subject topics** and '**threshold concepts**/'**Big Ideas**'. Subject topics are the specific aspects of subjects that are studied. Threshold concepts/Big Ideas tie together the subject topics into meaningful schema. The same concepts are explored in a wide breadth of topics. Through this 'forwards-and-backwards engineering' of the curriculum, pupils return to the same concepts over and over and gradually build understanding of them.
- 6. A **Learning Wall** maps the progression of the threshold concepts/'Big Ideas' across the school in each subject area. Teachers use this map to ensure they explore prior knowledge with children and thus support the building upon this in the long-term memory.
- 7. For each of the threshold concepts three **Milestones**, each of which includes the procedural and semantic knowledge pupils need to understand the threshold concepts, provides a progression model.
- 8. **Knowledge categories** in each subject give pupils a way of expressing their understanding of the threshold concepts.
- 9. **Knowledge webs/organisers** help pupils to relate each topic to previously studied topics and to form strong, meaningful schema.
- 10. Cognitive science tell us that working memory is limited and that cognitive load is too high if pupils are rushed through content. This limits the acquisition of long-term memory. Cognitive science also tells us that in order for pupils to become creative thinkers, or have a greater depth of understanding they must first master the basics, which takes time.
- 11. Within each Milestone, pupils gradually progress in their **procedural fluency and semantic strength** through three cognitive domains: basic, advancing and deep. The goal for pupils is to display sustained mastery at the 'advancing' stage of understanding by the end of each milestone **and for the most able** to have a greater depth of understanding at the 'deep' stage. The time-scale for sustained mastery or greater depth is, therefore two years of study.
- 12. As part of our progression model we use a different pedagogical style in each of the cognitive domains of **basic, advancing and deep**. This is based on the research of Sweller, Kirschner and Rosenshine who argue to direct instruction in the early stages of learning and discovery-based Curriculum Statement approaches later. We use direct instruction in the basic domain and problem-based discovery in the deep domain. This is called the reversal effect.
- 13. **Also as part of our progression model we use POP tasks (Proof of Progress) which shows our curriculum expectations in each cognitive domain.**
- 14. Subject Leaders, and the **Research Leader** in school, continually keep abreast of new research in teaching and learning. Subject leaders especially focus on pedagogy which is subject specific. This is cascaded and discussed with colleagues in order to ensure sharing of best practice models.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of the [National Curriculum programmes of study](#), which all maintained schools in England must teach.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of Governing Bodies set out in the Department for Education's [Governance Handbook](#).

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In addition, this policy acknowledges the requirements for promoting the learning and development of children set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#).

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The Governing Body will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- Enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- It fulfils its role in processes to disapply pupils from all or part of the National Curriculum, where appropriate, and in any subsequent appeals

### **3.2 Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the Governing Body
- Where appropriate, the individual needs of some pupils are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from all or part of the National Curriculum
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The Governing Body is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The Governing Body is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

### **3.3 Other staff**

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

All Teachers are subject leaders. They keep abreast of current research in their subject areas and facilitate the sharing of good practice across the school via subject display boards, subject specific research, in house training and working collaboratively with colleagues and peers across the cluster and Red Kite Teaching Alliance. This is facilitated through subject networking meetings and collaborative projects.

## **4. Implementation - Organisation and planning**

- Our curriculum is delivered in blocks with some thematic vehicles used to make links within and between subjects eg Spain
- Our curriculum is broad and balanced and based on current research. It covers all aspects of the national curriculum and incorporates curriculum drivers to personalise it to the needs of The Whartons school community. Our drivers are: Diversity, due to the fact the school community is not very ethnically diverse; Enterprise, to support children's development of enterprising approaches; Well-being, to ensure in ever challenging times children and staff focus on supporting good mental health; and out-door learning, making the most of the school's surroundings and use learning in the outdoors to inspire, challenge and support well-being both physically and mentally. The curriculum drivers are woven into the teaching and learning of all subjects as appropriate.
- Subjects are designed to build on prior knowledge and prepare children for the next stage in their education. Each subject has clearly identified aims, visions and missions. Subject leaders have identified key concepts or 'Big Ideas' within their subject and track these across school using our learning wall. These big ideas/key knowledge concepts are built upon during children's journey through school. There are identified and agreed end points for all children's learning across every area of the curricular at The Whartons. This has been constructed taking into account collaboration with other primary and secondary school colleagues, ensuring children are ready for their next steps in education. Subject leaders share recent and relevant research in to subject specific pedagogy (approaches to teaching and learning) with colleagues in school. They support staff in planning effective lessons in light of research and best practice.

- Each subject leader has written a policy documents for teaching and learning approaches in their subject
- We use a comprehensive PSHE scheme 'Jigsaw', recommended by the PHE society to ensure that:
  - Relationships and health education
  - Relationships and sex education (if applicable)
  - Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
  - British values

are embedded across the whole school. Time is allocated weekly, themes are supported by weekly whole school assemblies and progression in PSHE is shared with parents and pupils via parent forums, website pages and in school displays. There is a separate Jigsaw policy which explains teaching and learning of PSHE across school.

- Long term plans are created collaboratively with teachers and subject leaders, ensuring coverage, which develops key concepts and all areas of the National Curriculum across school year groups for every subject. These are shared on the website. A learning wall in school identifies the key concepts taught in each year group for each subject. Teachers and subject leaders can identify and ensure there is an understanding of prior knowledge in each of the key objectives from previous years. They use this to plan continuity and progression in the subject.  
Medium term plans are written by teachers and include subject specific objectives as well as identifying where curriculum drives are woven into learning, how basic skills are consolidated, identify specific tiered vocabulary (challenging, technical and academic) which children will be taught through the unit of work and how probing questioning will be used to secure understanding and encourage mastery. Short term plans are teachers' own resource. They use a wide range of quality schemes and resources, research based approaches, alongside tools such as lesson plan proformas to construct comprehensive sequences of lessons.
- Subject leaders constantly audit resources to support teaching and learning in their subject and secure new resources at appropriate. They share up to date subject specific research and resources via subject noticeboards in the staffroom

See our EYFS policy for information on how our early years curriculum is delivered.

### **Implementation**

Our curriculum design is based on evidence from cognitive science; three main principles underpin it:

1. learning is most effective with **spaced repetition**.
2. **Interleaving** helps pupils to discriminate between topics and aids long-term retention.
3. **Retrieval** of previously learned content is frequent and regular, which **increases both storage and retrieval strength**.

In addition to the three principles we also understand that learning is **invisible in the short-term** and that sustained mastery takes time.

Our content is subject specific. We make intra-curricular links to strengthen schema.

Continuous provision, in the form of daily routines, replaces the teaching of some aspects of the curriculum and, in other cases, provides retrieval practice for previously learned content.

In order to support effective learning, a set of approaches and pedagogies underpin the process of Teaching and Learning at The Whartons. **The Teaching and Learning Strategy** (Appendix 1) supports the acquisition of knowledge in the long-term memory.

## **5. Inclusion**

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEN
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report.

## **6. Impact and Monitoring arrangements**

### **Impact**

Because learning is a change to long-term memory it is impossible to see impact in the short term.

We do, however use probabilistic assessment based on deliberate practise. This means that we look at the practices taking place to determine whether they are appropriate, related to our goals and likely to produce results in the long-run.

We use comparative judgement in two ways: in the tasks we set (POP Tasks, see point 13) and in comparing a student's work over time.

We use lesson observations to see if the pedagogical style matches our depth expectations (see point 12)

Governors monitor coverage of National Curriculum subjects and compliance with other statutory requirements through:

- regular school visits
- meetings with the school council
- gathering pupil voice
- carrying out partnered learning walks
- meetings with Senior Leaders to monitor progress of the School Improvement Plan against Ofsted criteria
- monitoring progress and initiatives through discussions via the Teaching and learning committee

Subject leaders/curriculum leaders monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school by:

- planning scrutinies
- learning walks
- book scrutinies
- leading training

Subject leaders/curriculum leaders also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Head Teacher, DHT and Governors' Teaching and Learning committee. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full Governing Body.

## **7. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- EYFS policy
- Assessment policy
- SEN policy and information report
- Equality information and objectives
- The Whartons' Teaching and Learning Strategy
- Pupil Premium Strategy Document
- Subject specific policies
- Research Newsletters

