

Brandwood Community School

Curriculum Policy

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Introduction

The Government introduced the new primary National Curriculum in September 2014, requiring all maintained schools to adapt their existing school curriculum in order to meet the renewed expectations and develop revised assessment and tracking systems, ensuring there is clear curriculum intent, implementation and impact on learner progress and attainment. Schools were given considerable choice and freedom to design and implement a school curriculum and assessment system that is adapted to meet the specific needs of their learners and school context. Consequently, we embraced this opportunity with the intent of designing our own challenging, broad and balanced curriculum. Regular review of our school curriculum has ensured that learning experiences, the overall coherence of the curriculum and progression of knowledge and skills have consistently been evaluated and developed in order to ensure the resulting plans and lesson delivery meet all statutory obligations whilst also providing the highest quality curriculum tailored to the needs of our learners.

Our school curriculum contains all the planned learning necessary to promote optimum academic and personal achievements for all the learners in our care. It includes the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum but also a wide range of ambitious, relevant themes and enrichment activities to evoke challenge, enthusiasm, curiosity and interest to enquire, investigate and subsequently learn. The continued commitment to the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) is also embedded throughout our school curriculum, as are British Values, Citizenship and SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development) themes. The revised approach to planning the school curriculum ensures that the integrity of subject disciplines is fully evident in teaching and learning across EYFS and each of the Key Stages with clear progression evident in the skills, knowledge and understanding gained. Concepts are carefully sequenced and the progression of subject knowledge and curriculum coverage is monitored and evaluated by our senior leadership team, subject leadership team and teaching staff.

Our approach is also enquiry based so that our learners are regularly engaged in ownership of their learning and provided with opportunities for purposeful discussion in order for them to develop their linguistic and debating skills and serve as role models for others, as befits our context. Purposeful research and investigation are a consistent feature of teaching and learning and the investment in enabling this approach, in terms of library books, artefacts and computing equipment, has been extensive and meticulously planned to support the vibrant school curriculum and effective implementation. Reading is prioritised throughout the curriculum to allow all learners to access all the curriculum has to offer throughout school and develop the skills to become lifelong learners.

We have successfully implemented our recently revised curriculum intent, long, medium and short-term plans and we will continue to evaluate the impact of this, developing and improving each unit of learning so that the curriculum remains progressive, relevant and appropriate to our school context, whilst also providing consistently high-quality teaching and learning opportunities. Half termly pre-planning meetings provide the opportunity for class teachers to work closely with subject leads in order to review and refine the medium-term plans due to be delivered the following half-term. This review cycle ensures all teaching and resourcing is carefully considered ahead of time and matched to the relevant subject intent to ensure planned lessons are providing the opportunity for all learners to meet expectations. We also invite and plan regular monitoring and support from Governors and our School Improvement Partner, alongside our internal regular and rigorous monitoring systems, to support staff to continually develop and improve our curriculum provision and standards in all subjects.

Equal Opportunities & Inclusion

All learners will be able to access the full curriculum and there will be no discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, culture or ability. Learning opportunities will be planned to support the needs of all, including those with learning or physical, sensory or motor difficulty. Planning will reflect any relevant targets set for individual learners, where applicable. Teachers will set suitable learning challenges for those who are identified as more able, ensuring that appropriate provision is made.

Aims

At Brandwood Community School we strive to, continually:

- Enable all learners to develop skills, knowledge and understanding, building on the prior, crucial knowledge they need to reach their full potential and achieve the ambitious aspirations we encourage them to have
- Set clear expectations for class teachers, subject leads and support staff in terms of planning, teaching, learning, monitoring and mapping of subject specific skills, knowledge and understanding
- Ensure the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics and computing are systematically developed and regularly applied within the context of cross-curricular and subject specific learning throughout the school

- Promote purposeful research and investigation whereby learners actively pursue questions with a spirit of enquiry sustaining high levels of concentration, collaboration or, at times, independence so that they become 'life-long learners'
- Provide equality of opportunity for all learners to access the curriculum, including those who have Special Educational Needs or Disability, a medical condition, are at the early stages of language acquisition (ESLA), are disadvantaged or have any other potential barrier to learning
- Facilitate an excellent, vibrant, well-resourced and highly organised learning environment in all areas of the school, which sets high expectations and offers encouragement to all learners by ensuring their work is valued and celebrated
- Ensure that the development of 'British Values' alongside a wide range of SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Development) themes, international values, environmental issues and human rights are central to learning and are an enduring feature of school life
- Plan curriculum opportunities to develop young citizens who are responsible, caring, informed and respectful of others and their cultures and beliefs through a conscious understanding and commitment to participate in a democratic way of life
- Carefully plan purposeful and meaningful enrichment activities, which include specialist visitors e.g., artists or community members, outdoor learning, theme days, residential experiences and topic-based trips to provide a context for learning and first-hand experiences to motivate and excite our learners
- Provide extra-curricular activities on a seasonal basis to enhance our curriculum and identify, nurture and develop the individual talents of our learners
- Invest in the CPD (Continuous Professional Development) of all staff so that curriculum requirements can be met and learning, and therefore curriculum impact for learners, continues to evolve and result in the highest possible standards
- Recognise the crucial role parents and carers have in supporting learning and make every effort to encourage parent and carer involvement and support with 'home learning', including regularly inviting parents and carers into school to share our curriculum learning

Curriculum Organisation

All subjects are taught discretely with dedicated lessons. However, wherever feasible and appropriate they are linked to the overall topic theme and the subjects have been mapped over the course of the year so that this is often possible whilst not diluting the skills, knowledge and understanding of each programme of study. The subject specific intended learning outcomes are protected within the structure of our long, medium and short-term plans and links are only made if appropriate. See Topic Planning Guidance (**Appendix 1**).

Specialist teachers and coaches are employed to deliver French, Spanish and PE in some year groups so that PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) time is delivered through high quality teaching. This ensures that the teaching, learning and standards in these subjects are safeguarded and continuity is also in place as the remaining subjects are planned, taught and assessed by the class teachers. A specialist music teacher is also employed from the LA's music service to work alongside class teachers delivering music lessons as CPD.

All subjects are led by subject lead teams who work collaboratively to ensure progression from EYFS through to Y6. Subject leads ensure that the skills, knowledge and understanding required in the individual programmes of study (NC 2014) are tracked and monitored so that any adaptations are addressed at the earliest opportunity. The curriculum is carefully mapped out to ensure progression of skills and the subject overviews are updated annually in collaboration with class teachers. Each half-term subject leads update a subject lead portfolio, collating samples of work from each year group and mapping these against the national curriculum and end of year expectation. Any gaps identified inform subsequent planning to ensure full coverage and optimum progression for each subject. Support is also provided by subject leads so that all staff are confident to deliver all subjects and have the subject knowledge & necessary, high-quality resources to do so. Additional release time is provided to all subject leads, when necessary, to ensure they can effectively fulfill their duties.

Planning

Planning for all subjects, core and foundation, is based on the National Curriculum 2014 programmes of study end of year group and Key Stage expectations, which have been adapted to form key objectives and end of year expectations for each subject to ensure that the statutory requirements are fully embedded and implemented. Curriculum planning consists of three phases: long term, medium term and short term:

- Long term planning is published on the school website and maps the topics to be taught in each subject, each half term, across each year group.

- Medium term planning, based on the expectations set out in the revised programmes of study 2014, identifies the main learning objectives to be taught each half term and pertains specifically to one subject area, thus ensuring the integrity and progression of the skills, knowledge and understanding of each subject. This planning also contains, where appropriate, prior, crucial knowledge, key vocabulary, cross-curricular links and reference to the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child). Links to SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development) and 'British Values' are included on PSHE and Relationships Education lesson plans. Tasks will include a range of mixed ability group and partner work where possible and may include a carousel of different activities where appropriate. Learners are provided with the opportunity to feedback to the rest of the class about what they have learnt after completing their group task.
- Short term planning is completed on a weekly basis using the English and maths MTPs. A combination of Maths No Problem and Rising Stars supplements planning and provides resources for maths.
- Teachers are encouraged to group learners in a variety of ways in order to achieve optimum outcomes dependent on the subject e.g., mixed ability, partners or setting, where appropriate
- Class teachers also provide the same lesson planning for support staff, detailing the main teaching points, expectations and intended outcomes for the learners they are supporting. This planning is shared before each lesson to ensure that support staff are confident in their role of supporting and challenging learners.
- Accurate and purposeful reflection is utilised to evaluate each lesson, following marking and discussion with support staff, where appropriate. The outcomes of evaluations are then used to inform future planning, teaching and learning.

Knowledge organisers are provided for all learners for all history, geography, science and RE topics. They are completed for art, design technology and music when learning about an artist, inventor or composer as part of the topic. The knowledge organiser contains the key facts, information and vocabulary to gain a basic knowledge and understanding of the topic being taught. Knowledge organisers are introduced to learners at the start of a topic and a link to a completed copy is provided so parents and carers can access these on the school website. They are used to encourage discussion, enquiry and identify prior knowledge and are referred to (and added to in KS2) regularly throughout the course of the topic. Blank spaces are left on the knowledge organiser for learners to add any new and interesting facts that they learn.

All learners with SEND will be able to access the full curriculum with additional support or resources, dependent on the extent of their needs. The SENDCos will provide support to class teachers to plan activities for learners with SEND, including the use of appropriate resources.

Planning and monitoring checklists for each subject and are used by teaching staff when planning and subject leads when monitoring to ensure high-quality teaching and learning in each subject discipline and consistency and progression between year groups. Subject leads regularly monitor long, medium and short-term planning against the monitoring criteria for each subject in line with the termly monitoring timetable, using the expectations in the relevant programme of study as a guide. Prompt, clear verbal and written feedback is then given to staff to improve and develop planning further and follow up monitoring enables subject leads to monitor how feedback has been taken on board and become embedded in future planning and teaching. Pre-planning meetings are used half-termly for foundation subjects and on a 3-week cycle for core subjects to allow for professional discussion between subject leads and class teachers regarding planning and resources prior to teaching, and to offer any support needed. Early Career Teachers (ECTs) receive increased levels of support with planning from their mentor and subject leads.

Assessment

The school recognises that assessment is integral to the teaching and learning process but that it must be reliable and thoughtfully designed with purpose. With the removal of National Curriculum levels, schools have the freedom to design their own assessment systems tailored to suit the needs of their learners. The new National Curriculum was built on the premise that learners should study fewer things in greater depth. Progress is no longer about 'value added', exceeding expectations or the speed of progress. Progress is now focused on the depth of learning and mastery of the curriculum. National expectations are defined at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 with the majority of learners expected to be fluent in the curriculum content of each subject by the end of their Key Stage. We know that some learners may take longer to fully understand a concept but may demonstrate a good understanding by the end of the Key Stage. We believe it is important to assess progress within a Key Stage to ensure learners are on track to meet end of year and end of Key Stage expectations and to identify any learners who are under-attaining or under-achieving and any wider misconceptions that need to be addressed and revisited. Interventions, based on accurate question level analysis, are then put into place at the earliest opportunity to address any identified barriers to learning.

The expectations in core subjects have been organised into realistic yet challenging year group expectations. Our assessments are used to identify if learners are meeting or exceeding year group or end of Key Stage expectations and, importantly, how well learners are progressing from their individual starting points. In maths and English, the NTS tests are used in Key Stage 1 and 2 bi-annually. The results are recorded to track the progress that learners have made. These tests are matched to the revised year group expectations in the maths and English programmes of study 2014. In maths

and English, a range of further assessments are used to help teachers to assess learners against end of year expectations: these include the Salford reading test, RWI assessments and number bonds and times tables assessment trackers.

For foundation subjects, low-stakes assessment quizzes (Kahoot) are used throughout and at the end of a unit, to assess learners understanding of prior crucial knowledge, the key knowledge and vocabulary taught, and end of year expectations. These Kahoot outcomes, alongside teacher judgement inform assessment overviews to assess whether learners are working towards, meeting or working above the expectations. In science, Snap Science 'snapshot' assessments are also built into the medium-term plans to regularly review key concepts and assess learners' understanding towards the end of year expectations. Subject leads monitor the assessments at the end of each topic to ensure the majority of learners are making expected progress and provide advice and support if this is not the case. They will also ascertain if there are any significant gaps in subject specific learning and will use this to inform future planning and teaching to ensure full coverage of all objectives and expectations by the end of the year or Key Stage, as appropriate.

Curriculum Improvement Planning

The School Improvement Plan contains action plans for English and maths as well as the Curriculum Development and Subject Leadership Plan. In addition, there are action plans for all subjects, which are updated on an annual cycle but contain longer term plans and objectives. All improvement planning is based on careful and accurate analysis of the outcomes from the previous year and any 'trends' that have been identified as a result, alongside local and national initiatives and the views of stakeholders and learners. English and maths are subjects that are continually high profile as without high standards in both our learners are not able to access the wider curriculum and therefore our investment in achieving optimum outcomes in both is substantial. However, we value the wider, creative curriculum and as such there is an annual curriculum review that informs the Curriculum Development and Subject Leadership Plan as part of the School Improvement Plan. Subsequently subject leads utilise this alongside their annual subject evaluations to devise a clear, improvement plan for every subject area, which together form the Curriculum Improvement Plan. All subject leads have received appropriate action planning training and support.

Subject leadership objectives are set annually also as part of the appraisal process whereby all teachers, with the exception of first year ECTs, agree subject lead targets for the year with regards to the planning, development and monitoring of their subject area. Relevant CPD opportunities are then matched to the intended outcomes to support all teachers to meet the SMART targets set.

Senior leads meet on a half termly basis to monitor the quality of our curriculum provision and plan the next steps for monitoring and support. Governors are also involved in the improvement planning process through the work of the Teaching and Learning Committee, who meet termly on behalf of the governing body. Governors also take part in the governor monitoring cycle as it pertains to the school curriculum and improvement priorities.

Governors

The responsibilities of the governors include:

- Considering the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum to ensure that it has suitable breadth, depth and relevance to meet any statutory requirements as well as the needs and interests of learners
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of individual subject curriculum policies
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and delivery of the curriculum
- Evaluating the effectiveness and rigour of the school's assessment procedures and use of the findings to develop capacity for sustainable improvement and to narrowing gaps in achievement
- Considering the impact of teaching and learning and progress in different subjects and year groups
- Reviewing the strategic direction of the school to ensure that the vision, ethos and values are current and appropriate
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of Special Educational Needs and Disability provision

Subject Leads & SLT Link

The responsibilities of the subject lead & SLT link include:

- Providing a strategic lead and direction for their subject area
- Develop, monitor, review and implement the subject policy across the school
- Developing the subject overview, ensuring skills are progressive and build on prior, crucial knowledge with sufficient coverage of skills across the subject over time
- Evaluate the subject provision and use this and assessment outcomes to identify the priorities for the subject throughout school
- Take responsibility for the completion, implementation and review of the subject action plan
- Supporting the induction of ECTs and ensuring subject specific expectations are shared at the earliest opportunity

- Regularly collect and monitor medium term planning and samples of work to provide feedback and gain an overview of standards
- Support colleagues to develop appropriate methods of assessment and regularly analyse the subject assessment data
- Ensure the subject portfolio is reflective of standards in the subject, monitoring activities and assessment outcomes
- Ensure National Curriculum coverage and progression throughout the school
- Identify any issues with staff subject knowledge and organise appropriate CPD
- Support colleagues in delivering and assessing the specific subject curriculum
- Keep abreast of national and local changes in the subject via links with the external services and attending relevant courses
- Report back to colleagues on new developments in the subject
- Support colleagues to enhance the curriculum with high quality enhancement experiences for learners
- Regularly audit, enhance and promote the provision and use of appropriate resources to support the subject
- Actively seek out and celebrate high achievement in the subject across all year groups
- Discussing subjects and lessons with individual and groups of learners to evaluate progression

Monitoring & Review

The Teaching and Learning Governor Committee are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the school curriculum and senior leads support this by planning regular curriculum reviews for governors as part of their monitoring timetable. Governors liaise with subject leads during the reviews, observe teaching and talk to learners to support their monitoring process. A summative report is then shared with the Head Teacher, subject leader and relevant staff before being reported at the full governing body meeting.

The Head Teacher, supported by the Deputy Head Teachers, is responsible for the daily organisation of the curriculum. The Head Teacher and curriculum team, which includes the Curriculum Development Lead and subject leads, monitor the curriculum through the following: planning, classroom observation, scrutiny of work and discussion with learners and stakeholders on a regular basis as outlined on the termly monitoring timetable.

The Teaching and Learning Committee will review the policy on an annual basis and update, modify and amend the contents as necessary to ensure it meets the specific needs of Brandwood Community School.

Relevant Policies:

Special Educational Needs Policy
Equality & Cultural Diversity Policy
Teaching & Learning Policy
Assessment & Feedback Policy
English Policy
Maths Policy
Science Policy
Computing Policy
Geography Policy
History Policy
Art Policy
DT Policy
MfL Policy
RE Policy
Music Policy
PSHE Education Policy
Relationships Education Policy
Educational Visits Policy

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Topic Planning Guidance

Firstly, it is important to reiterate that although the statutory curriculum is specified through the revised programmes of study for each subject, how this content is organised and taught is entirely up to each individual school. Our revised school curriculum is fully compliant with the programmes of study but is taught through a blend of rigorous, discrete subject teaching and equally effective cross-curricular work as both are necessary for optimum learning outcomes.

To clarify, for children to be able to apply aspects of learning from one subject to another they must be taught the skills discreetly initially. However, depending on the lesson, there is no reason why the context in which the skills are taught could not be cross-curricular e.g., problem solving re weight, ratio and proportion linked to the geography topic of Kenya through learning about the weight of animals, ratio of food to water etc. In many year groups the links between English and history or geography particularly have been sought for some time so that some of the knowledge acquired during reading lessons can be utilised in preparation for topic work and equally writing skills taught discreetly in English lessons are expected to be applied to the same standard through cross-curricular writing during topic sessions, without detracting from the topic learning focus.

Topic Planning Checklist:

- Does the link provide an opportunity to apply prior, crucial knowledge taught?
- How will it make learning more motivating?
- How will it deepen understanding?
- Has the integrity of the subject been maintained?
- Are the links made explicit to the children?
- Does the link guarantee appropriate coverage and progression in the subjects involved?
- Will it promote improved standards?

Do

- Fully utilise the classroom environment to promote the knowledge, understanding and application of non-fiction text type language features and organisation
- Expect cross-curricular writing in a **range** of text types already covered over the course of the half term and others taught previously and promote sustained writing appropriate to the age and ability of each child
- Plan for application and reinforcement of skills taught
- Introduce key facts and information through the use of knowledge organisers and allow learners the opportunity to refer back to this and add their own facts and definitions throughout the course of the topic
- Plan for learners to work in mixed ability groups or pairs to complete a variety of tasks including written, practical and research-based activities
- Regularly complete science investigations, which must be practically based and develop the working scientifically skills outlined in the National Curriculum
- Make expectations re the standard of work and presentation clear (see presentation guidelines); use mini plenaries to emphasise this during lessons
- Plan to clearly demonstrate how TA support is utilised throughout the lesson to promote learning across the curriculum i.e., during the lesson input, group work and plenary
- Review class and lesson organisation as appropriate to the lesson taught e.g., staggered inputs, mixed ability group or partner work
- Plan a plenary full of questions to 'keep them thinking'
- Ensure partner work to promote self-editing skills is as evident in topic lessons as core subjects

- Plan regular low-stakes quizzes (Kahoot) to review and assess key knowledge and vocabulary & use the outcomes to inform and adapt future planning

Avoid

- Too much 'teacher talk' or passive learning
- Focusing too much on demonstrating or referring to the writing skill expected during a topic input or overcomplicate the writing task: the main teaching points must be topic related
- Marking the cross-curricular writing with exactly the same approach used in English and ignore the subject specific expectations and intended outcomes e.g., science marking must be focused on scientific knowledge or understanding
- Expecting all the children to produce high quality non-fiction writing without some reinforcement or support e.g., scaffolding or careful differentiation or grouping (mixed ability to produce a shared model)
- Setting a learning intention which is focused on an English objective e.g., to be able to retell the story of Rama and Sita. Base the objective of the lesson on the skills you want the children to achieve in the specific subject area linked to the end of year expectations
- Planning something completely different for the middle and lower ability group every lesson so there is little or no challenge and limited exposure to key knowledge.

Discussion Books

A topic discussion book is used to promote and record discussions, practical group work and curriculum enhancement activities in science, geography, and history, supporting an enquiry approach to learning in these subjects. PSHE and Relationships Education are each recorded weekly in their own discussion book due to the particularly practical and discussion-based nature of these lessons. Discussion books should include a wide range of evidence which may include:

- Photographs of learners completing a task
- Post-it notes of learners' views and ideas
- Various methods of recording, e.g., graphs, tables, thought bubbles, notes, photographs