

New Forest Small School

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CURRICULUM POLICY STATEMENT

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1. VALUES, AIMS AND PURPOSES

a. Values and Purposes Underpinning the Curriculum

- At the New Forest Small School we believe education is about developing the 'whole child', by encouraging each individual's intellectual, social, cultural, emotional, spiritual, moral and physical growth, and thus general wellbeing.
- We believe education is also a route to equality of opportunity for all, a healthy and just democracy, a fair and productive economy based on sustainable development. Our curriculum is specifically designed to reflect the values and attributes that contribute to these ends. These include valuing ourselves, our families and other relationships, the wider groups to which we belong, the diversity in our society and the environment in which we live.
- Education should also reaffirm our commitment to the virtues of truth, justice, equality, honesty, trust and belonging.
- Our educational philosophy is founded upon the belief that the full potential of children may only be realised when their sense of well being and belonging is at its optimum.
- At the same time, education must enable us to respond positively to the opportunities and challenges of the rapidly changing world in which we live and work. In particular, we need to be prepared to engage as individuals, parents, workers and citizens with economic, social and cultural change, including the continued globalisation of the economy and society, with new work and leisure patterns and with the rapid expansion of communication technologies.

b. Aims of the School Curriculum

- The curriculum offers pupils a thorough, fun and stimulating journey, which aims to inspire in the children a joy of learning and lead them towards self-discovery. Our school curriculum aims to develop in each child a joy of learning. We believe lessons should be engaging, stimulating and challenging to encourage the best possible progress and highest attainment for each pupil. To achieve this it is essential to work with the child's natural skills and learning methods by carefully observing and responding to the unique nature of each individual child.
- We work with each child's strengths, interests and experiences in order to develop their self-confidence, their ability for self-exploration and their effectiveness at collaborative exploration.
- Our fundamental aim is to help each child to think independently, to be able to read between the lines, to question, to enquire, to see the bigger picture and to make connections with their own lives and the wider world. The aim of the curriculum here is not only to develop rational, inquisitive minds but importantly minds that are equipped with an emotional intelligence.
- The curriculum is modern and holistic in content within a humanist moral framework.

- The curriculum is carefully designed to help build strong foundations in the Kindergarten years – good social skills, good practical skills, good concentration, self-confidence and the desire to learn and discover.
- The curriculum offers high academic standards in the Primary Classes within a relaxed but stimulating environment.
- The curriculum is taught in an active rather than passive fashion, using drama and other activities to bring the subjects to life.
- The curriculum is also 'taught' through in depth discussions between the whole class and teacher – provoking thought, self-discovery and a genuine understanding.
- All subjects and topic areas of the curriculum are treated as inter-connected, as well as being connected to everyday life.
- The curriculum offers an education 'in context'; helping the child to also understand the context and history of each topic area.
- The curriculum is designed to be flexible and ever changing, operating within a flexible timetable.
- The curriculum is set up to take into account the individual and unique needs of each child.
- Assessment procedures within the curriculum are designed for the children and are therefore fun as well as challenging.
- Although thorough and challenging, the curriculum is there to provide quality rather than just quantity.
- The school curriculum is also designed to develop the pupil's sense of identity through knowledge and understanding of the social, cultural, moral and spiritual heritages of Britain's multicultural society and of the local, national, European and global dimensions of their lives.
- Each child is encouraged to appreciate human aspirations and achievements in aesthetic, scientific, technological and social fields, whilst prompting a personal response to a wide range of experiences and ideas.
- By providing rich and varied contexts for pupils to acquire, develop and apply a broad range of knowledge, understanding and skills, our curriculum enables pupils to think creatively and critically, to solve problems and to make a difference for the better.
- The curriculum provides each child with the opportunity to become creative, innovative, enterprising and capable of leadership, thus equipping each child with the skills and confidence, which will underpin both their success in, and enjoyment of, life.
- The curriculum also develops their physical skills and encourages them to recognise the importance of pursuing a healthy lifestyle and keeping themselves and others safe.
- The school curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and, in particular, develops principles for negotiating the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour as well as understanding the many different cultural, historical and social nuances which make up those boundaries.
- We aim to develop the child's knowledge, understanding and appreciation of their own and different beliefs and cultures, and how these influence individuals and societies.

- The school curriculum aims to develop pupils' integrity and autonomy and help them to be responsible and caring citizens capable of contributing to the development of a just society.
- The curriculum promotes equal opportunities and enables pupils to challenge discrimination and stereotyping.
- The curriculum aims to develop their awareness and understanding of, and respect for, the environments in which they live, and secure their commitment to sustainable development at a personal, local, national and global level. It also helps to equip pupils as consumers to make informed judgments and independent decisions and to understand their responsibilities and rights.
- The school curriculum promotes pupils' self-esteem and emotional wellbeing and helps them to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others, at home, school, work and in the community.
- The curriculum aim to develop each child's ability to relate to, and empathise with, others.
- The curriculum is designed to effectively enable pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change and adversity.
- We aim to prepare pupils for the next steps in their education, training, employment and life and equip them to make informed choices at school and throughout their lives, enabling them to appreciate the relevance of their achievements to life and society outside school, including leisure, community engagement and employment.
- To effectively achieve these aims of our curriculum we always try to work in collaboration with the individual needs of each child, with families and the local and global community.
- We believe that the essential prerequisite for effectively achieving these aims is to deliver our curriculum within a small scale, child centred educational environment, which is best suited to ensuring that every child has a genuine opportunity to fulfil their full intellectual, social, moral, creative, spiritual and physical potential.

c. Main Purposes of the School Curriculum

To establish an entitlement

- The School Curriculum secures for all pupils, irrespective of social background, culture, race, gender, differences in ability and disabilities, an entitlement to a number of areas of learning and to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes necessary for their self-fulfillment and development as active and responsible global citizens.

To establish standards

- The School Curriculum makes expectations for learning and attainment explicit to pupils, parents and teachers, and establishes fundamental standards for the performance of all pupils in the subjects it includes. These standards can be used to set targets for improvement, measure progress towards those targets, and monitor and compare performance between individuals, groups and schools. However these standards are not rigidly imposed but take careful consideration of the particular and unique needs and history of each child.

To promote continuity and coherence

- The School Curriculum contributes to a coherent framework that promotes curriculum continuity and is sufficiently flexible to ensure progression in pupils' learning. It facilitates the transition of pupils between schools and phases of education and provides a foundation for lifelong learning.

To establish an education for all

- To ensure entitlement for all pupils to a broad, balanced, modern and holistic curriculum that offers continuity and coherence and secures high standards.

To raise attainment

- To raise attainment in all subjects, through careful consideration and understanding of each child's needs and learning methods.

To provide a thorough curriculum

- To induct pupils into the essential knowledge, skills and discourse of subject disciplines and to develop specialisms appropriate to aptitude.

To prepare pupils for their future

- To equip children with the essential social, intellectual and moral awareness that will prepare them for the further and higher education, for the world of employment and for their future self-confidence and well being.

To increase awareness of community

- To help pupils become more aware of, and engaged with, their local, national and global communities. The School Curriculum helps children become fully aware of both the differences and similarities of their communities within a fundamental framework of empathy, tolerance and understanding.

To encourage self-responsibility

- The School Curriculum aims to encourage pupils to develop a strong sense of self-responsibility, to take responsibility for their actions, their emotions and their own health and safety, by being able to make informed choices based on an appreciation of the benefits and risks inherent in the choices they make.

d. Ongoing Development of the School Curriculum

The School Curriculum is specifically designed to remain flexible whilst retaining its core values. This flexibility is essential to allow the school to respond to topical issues and changes in society and the world at large.

As a school, which prides itself on its ability to meet the individual needs of each child, the curriculum itself can also be adapted to the changing needs of our pupils.

- The curriculum is used as a thorough, academic guide, which nevertheless allows for due flexibility and the ability to change and adapt. It is not inviolable.
- The teacher may adapt the curriculum to meet the children's needs, interests and abilities at the time, whilst always ensuring that key areas are covered.

- The curriculum is loosely attached to a term-by-term framework. However, if the class is particularly engrossed in a specific topic area, it will be given more time. This allows the children to experience the rewarding nature of 'in depth learning'.
- Similarly the curriculum operates within a flexible, daily timetable, which allows the teacher to spend as long as feels appropriate and necessary on each subject. The time spent on a lesson is once again governed by the particular needs and interest of each class. Lessons typically last from one to two and a half hours.
- Interesting topical issues are always given space within the curriculum, whether they are issues raised by the class, the media or world events. Consequently the curriculum is ever changing.
- When certain topic areas within a subject are taught in depth or when new, topical areas are added to the curriculum, it can mean that other, less important or relevant areas receive less treatment or are not studied. However it is to be understood that the fundamental purpose of the school's curriculum is to provide an education based on quality rather than quantity.

2. INCLUSION OF ALL PUPILS

a. Addressing Individual Needs

- As a small school with small classes we are in an excellent position to address the unique needs of each child. With a flexible curriculum we are able to tailor the curriculum for the benefit of each individual.
- The first part of the school day is a free choice period. This allows the teacher to offer individual tuition to pupils who, for whatever reason, are struggling with certain aspects of the curriculum.
- The composition of classes is based on ability in each subject. Pupils who have advanced ability in certain subjects are able to fulfil their potential in an 'older' class, whereas pupils who are struggling in certain subjects are able to shine in 'younger' classes more suited to their particular needs and ability at the time. As a small school, the children all mix freely between the ages, so there is no stigma attached to a pupil attending a 'younger' class in certain subjects.
- Where there is a broad mixture of ages and abilities in certain classes and subjects the teacher divides the class into appropriate groups during 'small group work' midway through the lesson. When the range of abilities is impossible to bridge the teacher will divide the class into two groups, setting work for group A whilst teaching group B. Midway through the lesson the teacher will then set work for group B and work with group A.

b. Setting suitable learning challenges

- We aim to give every pupil the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible. The school curriculum programmes of study set out what most pupils should be taught at each key stage – but we teach the knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that suit our particular pupils' abilities at any given time. This may mean choosing knowledge, skills and understanding from earlier or later key stages so that individual pupils can make progress and show what they can achieve. Where it is appropriate for pupils to make extensive use of content from an earlier key stage, there may not be time to teach all aspects of the age-related programmes of study. A similarly flexible approach is applied to take account of any gaps in pupils' learning resulting from missed or interrupted schooling (for example, that may be experienced by travelers, refugees, those in care or those with

long-term medical conditions, including pupils with neurological problems, such as head injuries, and those with degenerative conditions).

- For pupils who have been traumatised by previous experiences or schooling and need to follow a gentler pace provision is made to ensure these pupils receive time in the school day to rebuild their confidence and enthusiasm for learning. In certain circumstances this may lead to a reduction in homework, a lessening of written work in class or attendance on a part time basis. However these provisions are carefully monitored and regularly reviewed by staff in consultation with the pupil and parents.
- For pupils whose attainments fall significantly below the expected levels at a particular key stage, a much greater degree of differentiation is necessary. In these circumstances, teachers may need to use the content of programmes of study as a resource or to provide a context, in planning learning appropriate to the age and requirements of their pupils.
- For pupils whose attainments significantly exceed the expected level of attainment within one or more subjects during a particular key stage, teachers plan suitably challenging work. As well as drawing on work from later key stages or higher levels of study, teachers may plan further differentiation by extending the breadth and depth of study within individual subjects or by planning work that draws on the content of different subjects.

c. Responding to pupil's diverse learning needs

- When planning, teachers set high expectations and provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve, including boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs, pupils from all social and cultural backgrounds, pupils from different ethnic groups including travelers, refugees and asylum seekers, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We are aware that pupils bring to the school different experiences, interests and strengths, which will influence the way in which they learn. Teachers plan their approaches to teaching and learning so that pupils can take part in lessons fully and effectively.
- To ensure that we meet the full range of pupils' needs, teachers are aware of the requirements of the equal opportunities legislation that covers race, gender and disability.
- Teachers take specific action to respond to pupils' diverse needs by creating effective learning environments, securing pupil's motivation and concentration, providing equality of opportunity through teaching approaches, using appropriate assessment approaches and by setting flexible targets for learning.
- We also trust that if all of the above is set in place individual children will invariably begin to fulfill their potential. Targets for learning are not written in stone and take into consideration that each child learns at a different pace.

d. Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils

A minority of pupils will have particular learning and assessment requirements which go beyond the provisions described above and, if not addressed, can create barriers to learning. These requirements are likely to arise as a consequence of a pupil having a special educational need or disability or may be linked to a pupil's progress in learning English as an additional language.

Pupils with special educational needs

- Curriculum planning and assessment for pupils with special educational needs takes account of the type and extent of the difficulty experienced by the pupil. Teachers encounter a wide range of pupils with special educational needs, some of whom will have disabilities. In many cases, the action necessary to respond to an individual's requirements for curriculum access is to be met through greater differentiation of tasks and materials, consistent with school-based intervention as set out in the SEN Code of Practice. A smaller number of pupils may need access to specialist equipment and approaches or to alternative or adapted activities, consistent with school-based intervention augmented by advice and support from external specialists as described in the SEN Code of Practice or, in exceptional circumstances, with a statement of special educational need. Teachers, where appropriate, work closely with representatives of other agencies who may be supporting the pupil.

We provide access to learning for pupils with special educational needs by:

- a. Providing for pupils who need help with communication. Language and literacy
- b. Planning, where necessary, to develop pupils' understanding through the use of all available senses and experiences
- c. Planning for pupils' full participation in learning and in physical and practical activities
- d. Helping pupils to manage their behaviour effectively and safely and, at key stage 4, to prepare for adult life
- e. Helping individuals to manage their emotions, particularly trauma and stress, and to take part in learning

Pupils with disabilities

- Not all pupils with disabilities will necessarily have special educational needs. Many pupils with disabilities learn alongside their peers with little need for additional resources beyond the aids, which they use as part of their daily life, such as a wheelchair, a hearing aid or equipment to aid vision. Teachers take action, however, in their planning to ensure that these pupils are enabled to participate as fully and effectively as possible within the school curriculum. Potential areas of difficulty are identified and addressed at the outset of work, without recourse to formal provisions for disapplication.
- The school takes specific action to enable effective participation of pupils with disabilities by:
 - a. Planning appropriate amounts of time to allow for the satisfactory completion of tasks
 - b. Planning opportunities, where necessary, for the development of skills in practical aspects of the curriculum
 - c. Identifying aspects of programmes of study and attainment targets that may present specific difficulties for individuals.

Pupils who are learning English as an additional language

- Pupils for whom English is an additional language have diverse needs in terms of support necessary in English language learning. Planning takes account of such factors as the pupil's age, length of time in the country, previous educational experience and skills in other languages. Careful monitoring of each pupil's progress in the acquisition of English language skills and of subject knowledge and understanding is necessary to confirm that no learning difficulties are present.

- The ability of pupils for whom English is an additional language to take part in the curriculum may be ahead of their communication skills in English. Consequently teachers plan learning opportunities to help pupils develop their English and aim to provide the support pupils need to take part in all subject areas.
- The school takes specific action to help pupils who are learning English as an additional language by:
 - a. Developing their spoken and written language
 - b. Ensuring access to curriculum and to assessment

e. Inclusion in all subjects

To overcome any potential barriers to learning in all subjects, some pupils may require:

- Support to access text, such as through prepared recordings, particularly when working with significant quantities of written materials or at speed.
- Help to communicate their detailed ideas in tasks that require extended writing, through alternative communication methods such as the use of ICT or speech, to allow them to demonstrate their understanding and to maintain their concentration and motivation.
- Non-visual means to access sources of information when undertaking enquiries into each subject.

3. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Building personal development into the curriculum

Personal development is an essential aspect of the New Forest Small School's curriculum. The Schemes of Work provide opportunities to plan sequences of work, learning outcomes and teaching approaches that support personal development through Every Child Matters outcomes.

a. Enjoy and Achieve

Through becoming self-aware and self-managing pupils will -

- Develop a positive sense of their own identity and self-esteem.
- Be able to enjoy life and be positive about its challenges.
- Use their imagination and creativity to develop new ideas, insights and new ways of doing things.
- Learn to assess their skills, achievement and potential to set personal goals, negotiating and planning ways to meet them.
- Understand that achievement is life-long and that there are different ways to succeed.
- Aim to achieve personal excellence, enjoy learning and be motivated to achieve their best.

b. Be Healthy

Pupils will understand -

- How to look after their physical, emotional and sexual health.
- That they can and should make positive choices and take sensible actions to avoid harmful choices.
- The consequences that some decisions might have on their health and that of others and how to deal with illness, in themselves and others.

c. Stay Safe

Through learning how to make informed and responsible choices, pupils will –

- Understand how to identify risks, minimise them and deal with them in different situations and be able to make safe choices.
- Develop the confidence to take on new experiences and ideas safely.
- Identify the dangers in new and different choices in a changing technological world.
- Develop skills such as negotiation and assertiveness, to resist unhelpful pressure.

d. Achieve Economic Wellbeing

Pupils will be able to -

- Understand the qualities and skills needed for an adult and a working life.
- Handle uncertainty and respond positively to change.
- Make reasonable risk / reward assessments and act upon them in a variety of contexts, both personal and work-related.
- Understand about the global economy, the way business works and that there are different kinds of business.
- Manage their own money and be questioning and informed consumers of financial services.

e. Make a Positive Contribution

Pupils will

- Understand the multiple roles individuals play.
- Develop the skills and strategies to form effective relationships in a variety of roles.
- Know how to make a difference in a group, community or society.
- Know how to work effectively with a range of people of diverse cultures and backgrounds and understand the consequences of anti-social behaviour.

4. SKILLS

a. General and Functional Skills

The Curriculum provides pupils with a broad range of opportunities for developing different skills important for learning and for life beyond the classroom. Pupils are encouraged to apply their different skills in everyday situations as they spend time planning and developing their work, make choices and decisions, and think creatively and independently.

- Children are encouraged to always be flexible in their thinking, to see texts from a number of different perspectives, from conventional and alternative sources.
- There is plenty of opportunity for pupils to communicate effectively in class discussions, in-group activities as well as through their written work.
- Pupils are given broad scope to express themselves clearly and succinctly whilst developing their own point of views through careful analysis, reasoning and persuasion.
- The curriculum incorporates the development of many cross-curricular skills including skills essential to English, History, ICT, Geography, Science, Religious Education, Maths, PSHE and Art and Design. Although cross-curricular activities take place in each lesson, time is also given in the timetable for thematic days, activity weeks and events.
- Pupils are always encouraged to read and understand information and instructions, then to use this understanding to act appropriately, whilst always analysing how ideas and information are presented, evaluating their usefulness, accuracy and agenda.

b. PLTS

The Curriculum also supports PLTS (Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills), whereby the pupils are able to develop the ability to become independent enquirers, creative and reflective thinkers, team workers, self-managers and effective participants.

i. Independent Enquirers

To be successful in school and the world beyond the classroom pupils need to become independent enquirers who have the ability to explore, evaluate and challenge ideas and assumptions constructively. The key concept of critical understanding foregrounds these qualities by providing opportunities for pupils to analyse and make connections between texts, explore the ideas of others and develop their own. It requires independent enquirers who are able to look at information and judge its relevance, value and validity.

The Curriculum promotes all the skills of independent enquirers by developing pupils' abilities to:

- Develop their independence in reading and writing
- Explore, evaluate and challenge ideas and assumptions constructively
- Analyse and make connections between texts
- Explore the ideas of others and develop their own

- Identify questions to answer and problems to resolve
- Plan and carry out research
- Appreciate the consequences of decisions
- Explore events, issues or problems from different texts
- Analyse and evaluate information and judge its relevance and value
- Consider the influence of circumstances, beliefs and feelings
- Support conclusions, using reasoned arguments and evidence.

ii. Creative Thinkers

The key concept of creativity puts creative thinking at the heart of the curriculum. It emphasises extending young people's ability to use imagination, make fresh connections and use creative approaches in a range of different contexts. The curriculum encourages creative thinkers who can generate ideas and explore possibilities, connect their own and other people's ideas and experiences in inventive ways, and try out alternatives and new solutions. The key concept of competence and the key processes for speaking and listening and writing, with their focus on adaptability and the ability to make informed choices about effective ways to communicate, require creative thinkers who can adapt ideas as circumstances change.

iii. Team Workers

Pupils work confidently with others, adapting to different contexts and taking responsibility for their own part. They listen to and take account of different views. They form collaborative relationships, resolving issues to reach agreed outcomes. Pupils are given opportunity to adapt their behaviour to suit different roles and situations, including leadership roles; to show fairness and consideration to others; to take responsibility, showing confidence in themselves and their contribution and to provide constructive support and feedback for others.

iv. Self-Managers

Pupils are encouraged to organise themselves, showing personal responsibility, initiative, creativity and enterprise with a commitment to learning and self-improvement. They are encouraged to actively embrace change, responding positively to new priorities, coping with challenges and looking for opportunities. Pupils are taught to organise their time and resources efficiently and to deal with competing pressures, including personal and work-related demands. They are also encouraged to manage their emotions, and build and maintain relationships.

v. Effective Participators

Pupils are encouraged to actively engage with issues that affect them and the world around them. Pupils play a full part in the life of the school by taking responsible action to bring improvements for others as well as themselves. Pupils have opportunities to discuss at length issues of concern, seeking resolution where needed. They are assisted in presenting persuasive cases for action and in proposing practical ways forward and breaking these down into manageable steps. Pupils are shown how to influence others

through negotiation and the balancing of diverse views to reach workable solutions as well as acting as advocates for views and beliefs that may differ from their own.

vi. Reflective Learners

The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to become reflective learners by helping them develop their evaluative skills. Pupils can apply this evaluation to assess their own strengths and weaknesses, setting themselves realistic goals with criteria for success. Pupils are encouraged to review their progress, acting on the outcomes; to invite feedback and deal positively with praise, setbacks and criticism; to evaluate experiences and learning to inform future progress and to communicate their learning in relevant ways for different audiences.

vii. Embedding PLTS

With thoughtful planning, a range of PLTS can be embedded in any sequence of work. For example, pupils might be asked to prepare a group presentation on a local historical issue over several lessons. This would involve pupils:

- Identifying key questions and issues
- Researching issues
- Choosing the format for presentation and the approach to take for maximum effect, allocating roles and tasks, and delivering the presentation to an agreed timetable and answering questions
- Anticipating objections or questions and being sufficiently informed and historically aware to answer any problems
- Setting targets to improve with peers and teachers

5. CROSS-CURRICULUM DIMENSIONS

Cross-curriculum dimensions provide important unifying areas of learning that help young people make sense of the world and give education relevance and authenticity. They reflect the major ideas and challenges that face individuals and society. Subjects and topics are not taught in isolation but with constant reference to other subjects in the curriculum or other topics areas. At all times children are encouraged to see and investigate the connections between different disciplines as well as the connections with their own lives.

Cross-curriculum dimensions include the key areas of identity and cultural diversity, healthy lifestyles, social participation, enterprise, global dimension and sustainable development, technology and the media, and creative and critical thinking.

- One of the fundamental aims of the curriculum is to allow the pupil to see and be able to make connections between their everyday, real lives and the occasional abstract nature of academic learning. To this purpose, pupils are assisted in all subjects, to see how a subject area, whether a mathematical problem or a passage of literature relates to and mirrors their everyday lives.
- This is firstly achieved through teacher led discussions at the beginning and throughout each lesson, involving every child and thus ensuring that each pupil has a concrete understanding of the topic area.
- Secondly, everyday life connections are made through field trips related to each subject. The school's location in the New Forest is an invaluable and much used resource in this respect.

- All subjects in the curriculum are taught in an inclusive manner, which makes links between other subjects.
- Literacy is a cornerstone of all subjects and is applied in the majority of lessons with reference to, and often in conjunction with, the literacy lessons taught at the time.
- Where applicable numeracy skills are also accessed in a variety of lessons, from collecting data in subjects such as Geography and Science to assisting in the understanding of Music.
- IT skills are used in all subjects, from Internet research to recorded work.
- Drama is used in all subjects to help illustrate a topic area, from enacting an historical event to acting out the behaviour of atoms in different states.
- The pupils are always made aware of the crossover points between the Sciences, Design and Technology, Music and Geography, which usually cover similar topic areas in the same year.
- Similarly, subjects like English Literature and Life Studies often raise issues that are then related to the pupil's studies in other subjects.
- Educational visits and the use of experts from outside of the school further broadens the pupil's perspective and understanding.
- As well as making connections between other subjects and with the pupil's everyday lives, the curriculum is also designed to help the child understand each subject in its own context.
- This is achieved by always considering the history within each subject, from the History of Technology to the History of Rock Music. This is in turn related back to the pupil's History Studies.
- Where possible, reference is also made to the political and cultural history of the time when, for example, studying Darwin's Evolution in Biology or Gulliver's Travels in English Literature.
- History itself is taught chronologically to allow the pupil to absorb a sense of the flow of history, the progression of culture, as well as the cause and effect which underpins all historical events.
- Nothing is taught in isolation. For example, in English Literature the curriculum only uses whole texts and never fragments, whilst in the Sciences the pupils are given a solid understanding of the fundamental laws within Science in a manner which allows the pupil to build up their understanding in clearly defined layers of knowledge.
- To all these purposes the pupils use their knowledge acquired from everyday life, from other subjects and from previous topic areas within the subject studied to hypothesise and answer questions for themselves. The role of the teacher eventually evolves towards the role of a facilitator of questions.
- We also have specifically timetabled thematic days, activity weeks and events.

6. ACADEMIC PROGRESSION

a. The Kindergarten

- We believe that before we can teach a child effectively it is essential to build strong foundations. In the Kindergarten, through a careful balance between work and play, we give children sufficient time to develop positive social, personal and practical skills, allowing each child to develop at their own pace.
- The Kindergarten curriculum provides children with the opportunity to absorb the basic skills in Literacy, Numeracy and Knowledge of the World through individual lessons and small group work.
- Kindergarten children develop everyday, practical skills through Practical Life Activities.
- Social and personal skills are developed by giving the children the time and space for role-play, through structured playtime and through the encouragement of self-discipline.
- The Kindergarten curriculum takes a hands on, active approach to education where, through a combination of drama, activity and the use of Montessori equipment the children 'experience' the subject matter.
- The Kindergarten curriculum is taught in a relaxed manner, without pressure. A balance is sought between encouraging the child to academically progress and allowing the child the opportunity to progress when they themselves are 'ready'.
- Upon leaving the Kindergarten, a pupil will generally be slightly academically 'behind' their peers in traditional schools. However they will generally be more advanced in social and personal skills as well as having developed a solid foundation of self-confidence and the ability for self-discovery.

b. The Primary Classes

- As soon as the child has a sound grounding in basic academic skills and good social skills developed through role-play and teacher guidance, they move up to the Primary Classes. This usually happens at the beginning of the academic year in which the child turns 8. However, as each child is different, some children may join the Primary Class earlier, whilst others may join a little later.
- New children joining our school under the age of 9 will usually start in the Kindergarten for at least 1 term to give them the opportunity for role play and, if necessary, 'de-schooling', if their experience in their previous school was traumatic or academically stressful. This allows the new pupil to rebuild their self-confidence and love of learning.
- The curriculum of the Primary Classes is designed to develop high academic standards within a child-centred, small-scale environment. Children are assisted in developing excellent academic skills in an atmosphere free from overbearing pressure and an excessive amount of lessons.
- Following a gradual progression of carefully building up the child's knowledge and interest, the Primary Classes continue to lead the child towards self-discovery and the ability to work on their own projects.
- The curriculum is taught through extensive discussion, drama and other activities, such as field trips, as well as through written recording.

- Pupils above the age of 10 have the opportunity to record their work on either a laptop or computer.
- Upon leaving the Primary Classes, a pupil will generally be academically ahead of their peers in traditional schools and be more advanced in social and personal skills, providing they have attended the school for at least 3 years.

c. The Secondary

- Pupils join the Secondary at the age of 11, although this varies according to each individual child.
- The curriculum of the Secondary Classes is designed to develop high academic standards within a child-centred, small-scale environment. Children are assisted in developing excellent academic skills in an atmosphere free from overbearing pressure and an excessive amount of lessons.
- Secondary aged children have 3 lessons per day as opposed to only 2 per day in the Primary Class. The lessons last for an hour to an hour and a half.
- Secondary pupils also receive more regular homework – usually an hour per night.
- Following a gradual progression of carefully building up the pupil's knowledge and interest, the Secondary Classes continue to lead the child towards self-discovery and the ability to work on their own projects.
- The curriculum is taught through extensive discussion, group work, drama and other activities, such as field trips, as well as through recording.
- The majority of recorded work is made on each child's individual laptop.
- By the equivalent of Year 9 (although in some cases Year 8) the pupils begin to work towards their GCSEs, where it is expected that most pupils will take between 7 and 10 GCSEs, taken in the equivalent of Years 10 and 11.
- Secondary aged pupils also are taught how to write essays of up to 2,500 words as well as how to take notes in some lecture like lessons. Secondary aged pupils also begin to undertake their own extensive research. All this helps prepare them for the next stages of Sixth Form College and University.
- Secondary aged pupils are also given opportunities to assist in the Kindergarten as well as prepare lessons in subjects such as Drama in the Primary Classes under the guidance of a member of staff.

7. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

- All levels of assessment are designed to be fun and without pressure, but nevertheless challenging.
- All assessment procedures are used to help the child, not to set them up for failure. Children are encouraged to learn from their mistakes rather than see them as an indication of failure.
- Assessment procedures vary according to the children's age and, to a certain extent, ability.
- In the Kindergarten, assessments are largely informal and are based around the teacher's recorded observations of the child both at work and at play. Quizzes and games are also used for assessment purposes.
- Similarly, lower Primary children, aged between 8 and 9, are assessed on an informal, daily basis. Assessment is also carried out by the teacher in the extensive class discussions that form an integral part of each lesson, as well as in individual tuition sessions during the free choice period. The children also do regular fun quizzes and academic based 'challenges', weekly homework and snap tests in English, Maths, Science, Geography and History at the end of each half term.
- Upper Primary children, aged 10, are assessed following all of the procedures listed above, as well as in end of the year 'mock' exams in the 9 main subjects. Homework is usually twice a week.
- Upper Primary children, aged 11, are assessed following all of the procedures listed above, as well as in end of the year exams in the 10 main subjects.
- In the Secondary classes assessment is ongoing through observation, through class discussion input, through group and individual activities, through regular homework and through end of year exams (except the equivalent of Year 7 pupils).
- Lower Secondary children, aged 12, are also assessed as above. However they only sit 2 end of year exams in English and Maths and are principally assessed on project work carried out throughout the year in the other 8 main subjects.
- In the equivalent of Years 8 and 9 pupils sit end of the year exams modelled on GCSE papers in approximately 7 to 10 subjects.
- In the equivalent of Years 10 and 11 pupils sit their GCSE exams.