



Curriculum Design Statement

Leigh St. John's CE Primary School

The purpose of this document is to outline the method that has been adopted to implement the curriculum at Leigh St. John's CE Primary School. This statement sets out what we aim to achieve in our curriculum. The curriculum long and medium-term plans set out the knowledge and understanding that we have organised for each year group and key stage. The decisions that have been made have been done so by reference to the school's Aims and Values.

Through this curriculum design statement, we endeavour for all staff to demonstrate a clear knowledge and understanding of the organisation of the curriculum, its planning and the chosen method for securing children's entitlement to the full range of learning opportunities. The principles of breadth, balance, progression and connectedness are crucial to our curriculum design and ultimately enhance the quality of learning that takes place at Leigh St. John's.

Intent

At Leigh St. John's CE Primary, we have designed a curriculum that is broad and balanced, builds powerful knowledge and equips children with the wisdom and the capacity to change the world in a positive way. Above all, our curriculum is designed to help children to understand what it means to be a decent human being. Our curriculum has been designed to take account of the research around cognitive science and making learning stick; we have considered ways to make what is taught more meaningful and long lasting for our pupils. We ensure that our curriculum:

- Is knowledge rich. All aspects of the curriculum have been designed with progression and connectedness in mind; this ensures that children build on existing skills, develop strong schemata which translates into powerful knowledge. This, over time, enables pupils to know more, remember more and apply their understanding across multiple contexts and situations.
- is built around the objectives set out in the **National Curriculum**, which covers the core subjects: English, Mathematics and Science, and the foundation subjects: Computing, History, Geography, Art and Design, Design Technology, Music, Physical Education, Languages (Spanish), Citizenship (including PSHE and RSHE) and Religious Education.
- Enables English (including phonics) and Maths to be taught discreetly.
- Prioritises reading; a love of books and the development of life-long readers.
- Places a significant emphasis upon the development of vocabulary.
- Exposes children to a range of concepts and vocabulary. The curriculum content for the Foundation Subjects: History, Geography, Art and DT are organised into subject specific concepts which are encountered by children again and again with spaced repetition and in various contexts - enabling pupils to knit the key knowledge together. This approach enables children to remember what they have learned, understand it and use it to make sense of their world. In addition to subject specific concepts, we also filter our

curriculum content through global concepts like resilience, common good, responsibility and adversity. These concepts don't fall into discreet subject areas, and they don't tend to appear in any curriculum documents. They do, however, give us the opportunity to create connectedness in our curriculum by lifting us above the content we should be teaching to a position where we can start to see things from a wider perspective. The concepts that we plan around also help us to tap into children's personal learning as well as their thinking skills.

- Gives our children practical, first-hand experiences.
- Is enjoyable for the pupils.
- Is tailored specifically to the needs of our children.
- Supports our school ethos.
- Contributes significantly to the highest standards in English and Maths.
- Prioritises physical and mental wellbeing, allowing children opportunities to exhibit spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

Beyond the classroom

We believe that a broad and balanced curriculum extends beyond the classroom. We tailor and adapt our curriculum to meet the needs of our community, and in doing so, we provide a wealth of experiences throughout their time at school. Our intent is reflected in our innovative school charter which embodies a commitment to providing a range of experiences for pupils during their primary school life from experiencing live music to visiting museums and galleries. The charter supports pupils' wellbeing and makes a significant contribution to their excellent spiritual development.

Implementation

Our curriculum continues to be organised around topics. The knowledge we intend pupils to learn within a topic is organised into a schema with subject content grouped by concepts. In History, for example, the subject specific concepts are *settlements, beliefs, cultures and past times, location, main events, food and farming, travel and exploration, conflict, society and artefacts*. Through a variety of topics, pupils re-visit these concepts in many different situations. Put simply, we implement our curriculum with the premise that the more we keep coming back to things with the children, the more they are likely to remember them; therefore, key knowledge will become more familiar over time. When children meet the concept of 'settlements' in their project about coal mining in Leigh (Y2) and then meet 'settlements' again in their studies of 'The Stone Age' (Y3) and again in their learning about the Vikings (Y4), they stand a far greater chance of transferring key facts and knowledge about settlements to their long-term memory. Of course, embedded within the teaching of the Foundation Subjects is an emphasis on the skills of a 'historian', 'geographer', 'artist', 'scientist' and 'designer'. For example, in history, children are taught how to investigate and interpret the past: observing and handling evidence, asking questions, identifying how the past has been represented and using artefacts and other sources to find out about the past. Similarly, in geography, children are taught how to investigate places, investigate patterns and communicate geographically.

Teachers, through their planning, pull together subject content in topics that begin with a philosophical enquiry question - Why was coal mining so important to Leigh? – and with an overarching global concept – 'choices', 'adversity', 'resistance', 'responsibility'. These non-subject specific concepts act as a lens for the learning material to be filtered through. This approach allows for the explicit teaching of disciplinary knowledge whilst at the same time unpacking the 'big ideas' which prepare children to take up their place in today's world. When children encounter global concepts – 'power/greed', 'prejudice', 'technology', 'sacrifice' and 'integration' – with some repetition, connections across subjects and beyond subjects are

cemented. Our curriculum is delivered in a way that enables us to explore and revisit these concepts through history, geography, art, RE, DT and science, and they are a tool which propels children's knowledge and understanding beyond those confined to the national curriculum.

Our planning is designed to flow from lesson to lesson as a journey. History, geography and science act as the predominant subject drivers to each topic but woven between lessons on these aspects are other subject areas. We ensure, through our curriculum sequencing, that links have been considered and that content takes account of what has come before. Our concept driven curriculum is built upon high levels of repetition to help children develop schemata and strengthen links in their knowledge and skill base. The idea behind this teaching principle is that pupils remember more, know more and do more as they progress through school.

Subject specific concepts appear throughout the curriculums for history, geography, art and DT, and they are explored in different year groups through different topics. By highlighting these concepts, we are able to ensure that connections are made so that children begin to develop familiarity and confidence, which then supports their future learning within each subject. During the course of topics, we share significant amounts of knowledge with our children. In planning, our specific learning outcomes detail the knowledge that we want the children to know and remember. Retrieval practice is used during the course of each topic to ensure that key knowledge is revisited and remembered.

Ultimately, through our curriculum design, our aim is to make knowledge powerful and lasting by connecting it through concepts. Long-term retrieval opportunities are created by revisiting topic books beyond the term in which a given subject is being studied. Additionally, consumer online learning programs with built-in quizzes are used at spaced intervals between topics to provide retrieval practice for pupils. Retrieval practice techniques – no stakes quizzes, show-me boards and 'think and link' tasks - are planned for lessons and structured so that children are given the opportunity to recall key elements of content ensuring that it is further embedded in long-term memory.

Central to our curriculum design is the importance we place on vocabulary development because we believe that rich and extensive vocabulary aids the understanding of knowledge and the transfer of powerful knowledge to new contexts. We aim, through the delivery of our curriculum, to support pupils to be agile and flexible with new vocabulary so that they are able to articulate complex ideas.

Outstanding classroom environments stimulate and engage quality thinking and reasoning. Explicit weekly and medium-term planning is responsive to children's needs – incorporating holistic approaches to teaching and learning. Peer coaching and mentoring supports all staff to further develop curriculum pedagogy. Our marking policy is an opportunity for children to reflect on their learning and adapt to feedback.

Impact

Leigh St. John's CE Primary School uses rigorous triangulated monitoring throughout the year to gauge the impact of the curriculum design. Curriculum teams monitor individual subjects: monitoring planning, reviewing learning outcomes against agreed end points, considering pupil discussions, celebrating positives, highlighting areas of development and improving teaching through research, professional development and coaching. When evaluating the impact of our curriculum, we do not confuse coverage with progress. Nor do we believe that if a pupil remembers information at the point of delivery, they have truly learnt something. Progress is measured through careful monitoring of pupils' application of knowledge and skills across the curriculum – moving beyond 'remembering more' to 'knowing more'. Progress – the

remembering of more things – is evaluated against the age and stage expectations for each year group and key stage. Evidence elicited about pupil achievement is interpreted and used by teachers to make decisions about the next steps in teaching and curriculum delivery.

In our 2025 Ofsted Inspection, HMI – Jen Sloan – reported *“Pupils of all ages apply their learning confidently to the tasks that they are given. They learn deeply over time.”*

This is quality assurance of the impact of our curriculum on pupils' learning and development over time.

