

Blanford Mere Nursery & Primary School



Curriculum Policy

Date adopted by governors
November 2016
To be reviewed
November 2019

CURRICULUM POLICY

Article 29: *Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.*

The Primary National Curriculum, statutory from September 2014, states:

‘The national curriculum provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge that they need to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said; and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement. The national curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to range beyond the national curriculum specifications. The national curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils’ knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum.’

At Blanford Mere Primary School, we passionately believe that our children have the right to a broad and balanced curriculum. The curriculum of the school underpins all the learning that takes place and an engaging and inspirational curriculum can foster curiosity and a passion for learning so that children may develop into life-long learners.

Our School values underpin all that we do as a school.

- Respect
- Collaboration
- Kindness
- Forgiveness
- Responsibility
- Friendship
- Effort
- Resilience

Blanford Mere Primary School thought about its curriculum to ensure that there were more opportunities for subjects to be linked, so that learning would be purposeful and meaningful for pupils and so that they could apply their reading, writing, mathematical and information communication technology skills across the curriculum. Our fundamental aim in developing our curriculum is to ensure that the curriculum inspires pupils to learn. The range of subjects helps pupils acquire knowledge, understanding and skills in all aspects of their education, including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technical, human and social, physical and artistic learning. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and, within this, the promotion of fundamental British values, are at the heart of the school’s work.

Mastery in Learning

Mastery learning is a specific approach in which learning is broken down into discrete units and a logical order.

Mastery in learning is:

- Mastering a skill before learning new skills
- Understanding a skill conceptually and making links between topics
- Children should be able to show or explain a concept in a variety of ways
- Children should be able to apply a concept in a new situation

Learning Dispositions here at Blanford Mere Primary School

We believe that we have a curriculum that reaches every child within the school including children from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with SEN and balances the acquisition of knowledge with the development of key skills. It excites, inspires and motivates our children and staff, making learning purposeful and allowing our children to recognise the part they play within the community of the school.

Whole-school theme based learning

Each term or half term, the four teams at the school (Foundation Stage, KS1, Lower KS2 and Upper KS2) immerse themselves in planning linked to a theme. These themes are exciting topics which act as stimuli for all the learning that takes place within most of the curriculum subjects. Our themes allow for subjects to be linked and also give context to the skills which the children are learning. Topics are chosen to meet the requirements of the national curriculum and to reflect the children's interests. When selecting topic themes, we give much thought to selecting topics which:

- Place the development of children's English skills at the heart of all learning.
- Are broad enough to allow for a range of curriculum subjects to be explored in sufficient depth across the school;
- Can be explored at an appropriate depth and level of challenge, ensuring across a team;
- Enthuse staff and students;
- Allow for exciting 'wow' events to take place to capture children's imagination
- Allow for constant reinforcement of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- Are accessible to all students of all abilities including those with SEN and EAL

Breadth, Depth and Progression

Breadth: In selecting the topic themes, staff are careful to choose topics which allow a broad range of curriculum subjects to be explored. Therefore, staff give careful consideration in selecting themes which can be taken in a variety of directions, exploring a wide range of skills across the curriculum. In some themes, certain subjects are more prominent than in others. For example, in a History based theme, there may be less Geography occurring. It is the role of Subject Leaders and the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that adequate time is dedicated to each subject across the school. It is also part of the role of Subject Leaders to ensure that the themes facilitate the provision of their subject and suggest ways that staff could link the themes to their subject.

Depth: We understand that the topic themes must allow for the depth of study to be maintained in each year group. In order to ensure that this happens, staff only make links to the theme when it is appropriate and, if skills or knowledge need to be taught discretely, they will take place. Subject Leaders take responsibility for monitoring the breadth and depth at which their subjects are taught.

Progression: With each year group in a team following the same theme, it is important to ensure that progression takes place. Teachers have access to progression documents for each subject and these are used to ensure that the lessons they are planning for each subject are age and level appropriate. Subject Leaders monitor these documents to ensure that teachers are providing appropriate challenge across the curriculum. Each term, Subject Leaders request samples of work from each year group to ensure that there is a progression in skills taking place as the children progress through the year groups.

Effective Teaching

A broad and balanced curriculum must go hand in hand with effective teaching. It is our belief that good teaching leads to good learning and progress. It is our expectation that every lesson at Blanford Mere Primary School will be at least 'Good' but preferably 'Outstanding' against the Ofsted criteria. In planning across the curriculum, teachers will ensure a range of learning styles are accommodated so that all children can be engaged. Effective practice is shared with staff through coaching and mentoring, team teaching and staff CPD/INSET. Teachers are encouraged to work with others in school to improve an aspect of their teaching.

'Wow! Opportunities

We believe that children should frequently experience a sense of awe and wonder in their learning. Our curriculum model allows for frequent opportunities for teachers to provide these moments. For each topic theme, the staff consider how these moments can be achieved. It is usual for topics to begin with a 'WOW Starter' and for further 'moments' to be added throughout the term to reignite interest and enthusiasm. There are also opportunities for class teachers to take their classes on trips specific to their learning or for visits in the local community.

We believe in allowing the children the opportunity to learn from 'experts' in whatever area they are studying. Therefore, authors, scientists, performers and musicians are invited into school occasionally to provide the children with an insight as to how the skills they are learning at school can lead to success in later life. These 'wow' opportunities are not viewed in isolation, but provide a stimulus for work across the curriculum.

Parental Involvement

We understand the importance of parental involvement and the impact that support from home can have on a child's education. Therefore, we strive to maintain good communication with parents, keeping them informed of what the children will be learning and how they can support this at home. A termly newsletter, compiled by teachers within each phase, informs parents of what the children will be learning during the next term, with suggestions of how parents could best support their learning.

We provide regular opportunities for parents to join us in school to learn about our topics and how we teach. Parents are also invited into school for information meetings, workshops, assemblies, Christmas performances and class productions, with the intention of sharing and celebrating the work that has happened in school.

Parent's evenings happen three times per year and all parents are welcomed into school for a meeting with their child's teacher regarding their learning and general development. This is supplemented by the end of year reports, which show the children's academic band; progress and performance are also discussed.

Each year, a parent's questionnaire is sent out in order to gain their views on a number of issues. The results are compiled and a summary is provided for staff, parents and governors so that they can see how their views are making an impact on school development.

Role of Subject Leaders and the Curriculum Manager

Subject leaders provide professional leadership and management for a subject to secure high quality teaching, effective use of resources and improved standard of learning and achievement for all pupils.

Since the introduction of the National Curriculum 2014, there has been an expectation that all teachers, after successfully gaining Newly Qualified Teacher Status, will take an additional responsibility. This forms part of their standard teaching duties; the amount of responsibility and the number of subjects which a teacher leads is often dependent on the experience of the teacher. With the implementation of the National Curriculum 2014, strong subject leadership is essential as we wish to provide our children with an enriched, broad and balanced curriculum.

Subject leadership falls into two categories: Core subject leadership (Maths, English, Science and computing) and Foundation subject leadership (all other subjects).

Leadership is also required for other school initiatives such as Rights Respecting School Award Level 2 etc.

Subject Leaders are responsible and accountable for the subject throughout the school and are expected to possess an in-depth knowledge of the provision of their subject.

The key roles of Subject Leaders are:

- Ensuring that there is a policy for the subject and that this is kept up to date and line with National Policy.
- Write, monitor and evaluate an annual action plan for their subject.
- Monitor the provision of the subject through observations, learning walks, work scrutiny, pupil voice and planning scrutiny.
- Ensure that resources are plentiful, up-to-date and in good condition.
- Ensure progression takes place across the school.
- Provide guidance and training to staff within their area of expertise.
- Assist with planning, teaching, assessment and reporting within their subject.
- Keep well informed of any assessment that takes place for their subject
- Ensure that their subject has a high profile within the school.
- Organise whole-school events such as enrichment days for their subject.
- Regularly report the provision of their subject to the Senior Leadership Team.
- Represent the school in the Pentagon group.
- Liaise with SLT about resources and expenditure for their subject area.

The Curriculum and Inclusion

Like all aspects of school life, the curriculum is designed to be accessible to all. It is expected that all children have the opportunity to learn in a creative and encouraging learning environment which encompasses a range of learning and teaching styles. If children are identified as having special educational needs, we will do all we can to ensure that the needs of these children are met. In most instances, class teachers will be able to provide the resources and support required to enable these children to access the curriculum at a level appropriate to them. If class teachers feel that it is necessary to modify the curriculum in order to meet the needs of children with more severe special educational needs, then this will be done in consultation with the SENCO. Our curriculum model also allows for children who are identified as Gifted or Talented in specific areas to be extended in their learning. Leaders promote equality of opportunity and diversity when planning for inclusion in the curriculum at Blanford Mere Primary School, so that the ethos and culture of the whole school counters any form of direct or indirect discriminatory behaviour. Leaders, staff and pupils do not tolerate prejudiced behaviour and tolerance and acceptance is promoted widely.

Planning

Planning takes place across the curriculum in three waves: long term planning, medium term (for the entire half term) and daily lesson plans.

Long term planning is the overview provided by Subject Leaders and phase leaders to teachers which details the skills and overall coverage that the children in each year group need to possess by the end of an academic year. This planning is essential as it ensures that progression is taking place across the school within the whole school theme.

Teachers annotate these plans to show what objectives they have met within their lessons; this is monitored by Subject Leaders and the Curriculum Manager.

Medium term planning is the planning which is completed by the class teacher to show the lessons within a unit or theme. This planning will also identify skills and, focus on clear learning journeys.

Outcomes for learning are made explicit in this point of planning as well as opportunities for trips, visits and Extra-curricular activities. The learning objectives on these plans will be taken directly from the long term plan or reflect a need identified by the class teacher's assessment for learning.

Daily Planning will identify clear 'Steps to Success' to help children achieve the Learning Intention. Higher order questioning will be used to extend children's thinking, as well as differentiation and the role of other adults.

Created 16th November 2016 by Miss A Stanton

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