

CURRICULUM & PLANNING POLICY (inc. LEARNING AND TEACHING)

QUEEN BOUDICA COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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CURRICULUM & PLANNING POLICY

(inc. Learning and Teaching)

Rationale and Philosophy

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2012, National Curriculum 2014 and the Essex Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (RE) 'explORE' (2015) provide the basic building blocks for the construction of our school curriculum. Our challenge is to customise this basic entitlement and statutory element for learning, in the context of current thinking and good practice in primary education, and create our own distinctive, innovative and flexible curriculum. At Queen Boudica Primary School we take this as our starting point and fundamentally we believe that:

"... every learner is entitled to a curriculum rich and varied, challenging and inspiring, which enables every individual to fulfil his or her potential to the highest possible standard; so that all, for the benefit of all, are able to shape their destinies and create a better world."

Every Learner – a framework for the curriculum in Essex

We recognise that the curriculum cannot remain static and must be responsive to children, changes in society, the economy, new educational thinking and initiatives, and also the changing nature of our school. At all times our curriculum will meet statutory requirements, and changes will be made to the curriculum as these requirements are altered. This policy will be reviewed annually and adjusted if needed at any point in time in the light of any new legislation.

This policy outlines our approach to designing a curriculum that strives to reflect our values, aims and aspirations for the children of this school, and meets the needs of all the children in the community we serve. Underpinning our rationale and philosophy is the desire to raise standards in all subject areas for all children.

Aims

All maintained schools are required by law to have a broad and balanced curriculum for all children which:

- promotes spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development;
- prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Within the context of these requirements our curriculum has **three broad core aims** which underpin all planning and curriculum development. These are that we: develop **confident & resilient learners** (where there is a focus on children's self-esteem and developing a growth mind-set); promote **creative thinking** (through encouraging inquisitiveness, problem solving and enquiry based learning) and we focus on our **community** (our school, local and wider global communities and global dimensions).

We also aim to ensure our curriculum:

- makes creative and flexible use of time;
- promotes challenging subject teaching alongside equally challenging cross-curricular studies and a project approach to planning that ensures learning is relevant, purposeful and connected;
- demonstrates clear progression of children's skills, knowledge and understanding;
- promotes active learning through real contexts and first-hand experience;
- has ICT embedded across every subject so technologies enhance learning and teaching;
- utilises opportunities offered by the immediate school environment and our local community;
- promotes speaking and listening skills as a feature of all learning;
- has English and mathematics as a priority since children need to achieve well in these subjects if they are to make good progress in their education;
- includes an emphasis on children's personal development (spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical) and within this the active promotion of fundamental British values;
- includes a variety of learning and teaching styles so that all children can achieve;
- has developing sustainability at its heart guided by the principle of care: "care for oneself, care for each other and care for the environment";

- recognises the importance and contribution of out of hours learning and home-learning;
- is rooted in school self-evaluation and, in relation to this is shaped by new opportunities and initiatives.

Relationship to other policies

This policy helps translate the aims and values of the school into effective learning and teaching. It has implications for and feeds into and from many of our school policies, in particular the following:

- Early Years Foundation Stage Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Collective Worship Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Gifted and Talented Policy
- Home Learning Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Learning and Teaching Policy

How do we organise and plan the curriculum across each key stage?

In the EYFS there are seven areas of learning and development that shape our teaching and learning. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, called the prime areas, are: communication and language; physical development and personal, social and emotional development. The remaining 4 areas of learning and developments are the specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are: literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design. More Details of these seven areas, the curriculum as a whole and practice in the EYFS are outlined in the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Policy'.

For children in Key Stage One (KS1, Yrs.1-2) and Key Stage Two (KS2, Yrs.3-6), the National Curriculum has three core subjects which are English, mathematics and science. There are also foundation subjects: computing; art and design; design and technology (DT); geography; history; music, languages and physical education (PE). Guidelines are also provided for personal, Social, health and economic education (PSHE). Programmes of study for RE are determined in the Essex Agreed Syllabus 'exploRE' (2015)

Child'.

At Queen Boudica Primary School a key challenge is that the curriculum for each of these subjects ensures continuity and progression for children and that for all children there is appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study in every subject. We therefore have **curriculum maps** for each year group within the school. **These can be found on the school website.**

The National Curriculum is specified as separate subjects but we are not required to teach these subjects separately. Our curriculum recognises subject disciplines in their own right and views these as vital, with cross-curricular teaching strengthening, enriching and enlivening the curriculum. Fundamentally, well planned cross-curricular studies (which we call 'projects') create connections to develop children's understanding and learning skills. Cross-curricular teaching also enables children to apply what is learned from discrete subject teaching.

The **curriculum maps** for each year group constitute part of our **long term** plans. The curriculum maps give an overview of what will be covered in each year. Projects are suggested eg. in Y6 there is a project called 'Dinosaurs'. This project can be taught as outlined or may be altered according to the teacher's/children's creative ideas. The skills objectives for any term may be interchanged between terms (within that year only) to enable teachers to deliver the curriculum more flexibly and create projects. Staff should be aware of the whole school curriculum map when planning projects; it is important they consider children's previous and future learning.

The other part of our long term plans are **skills maps**. In particular, these skills maps provide guidance on progression in children's skills for each subject area. Skills maps state learning in a subject for each year group. The skills from each subject are also combined from these skills maps on a year group plan.

From the long term plans staff work together to produce **medium term plans** for the class for the term based on the year group skills map. In these, complementary aspects of the programmes of study for different subjects may be combined into a single unit of work or a 'project' (as outlined on the curriculum maps). This project may be a longer project lasting a several weeks and involving several subjects (eg. for a term or half term) or a mini project which may be shorter and just relate to two or three subjects. As previously stated, opportunities for children to make connections between subjects are considered essential to make learning more meaningful and they also support effective curriculum coverage. However, where programmes of study cannot be meaningfully linked subjects are taught for that term or half term on a stand alone basis.

Short term plans are derived from the objectives stated in medium term plans. Weekly plans are prepared for English and mathematics in KS1 and KS2, and all other subjects. Teachers use school formats for English (including project work also if they wish) and maths which **must include certain key elements** (called '*non-negotiables*') and may include other elements which staff may choose to use. **Planning is monitored by Subject Leaders at various points during the year; feedback is given to staff.**

Teachers may choose to complete lesson plans for other lessons and may be directed to do so if deemed necessary. Staff may annotate plans and keep informal notes to help inform future planning.

Some subjects, such as English and mathematics, need to be taught regularly and in our school, we almost without exception teach these subjects **daily**. Exceptions might be a school trip or something similar.

PE is one subject that needs to be taught **every week** to develop children's physical skills and promote their fitness and health. Furthermore, computing is also part of children's learning each week, whether as part of direct skill development or as part of enhancing learning and teaching in other subjects. Science should be taught regularly, that is, in most weeks so that knowledge and understanding of concepts and development of skills is continuous and ongoing in this core subject. It may however be more appropriate to block some science learning.

Other subjects/areas are not taught every week, every half term or even every term. For example, we may teach history in every other term in order to devote more time ie. longer lessons that sustain children's interest and help them achieve more. Some subjects, such as art and design and DT, are often taught in alternate half terms. On occasions, subjects are blocked and taught for a whole day or for a week eg. a DT project. This motivates children, skills can be developed and projects be 'seen through' to completion. The key to curriculum planning is flexibility so learning and teaching is enabled to be effective and raise standards across all subjects.

How do we enrich our curriculum to further challenge, motivate and inspire children?

At Queen Boudica in order to inspire children and motivate them we endeavour to find ways to 'bring our curriculum to life' by providing not only exciting and stimulating lessons at all times, but also **enrichment opportunities**.

In relation to project work we organise **educational visits** for the children to museums etc and we may also invite **visitors** into the school to talk to the children, eg. how Hanukkah is celebrated by Jewish people. In particular, we encourage members of the local community with expertise or relevant interests, or those with specific roles in the community, to come in and talk to or work with the children eg. a member of the Parish Council or representatives from local churches.

Sometimes we devote '**theme weeks**' or '**special days**' to a particular curriculum subject or theme eg. science week, British Values week or multicultural art week. In these weeks we take a break from our usual timetable to take learning one step further. The children can become immersed in a project or subject and gain a more in depth understanding, as well as having the opportunity to try different things.

Our **extra-curricular activities** also provide further opportunities for children. Many different after school clubs link to directly to curriculum areas; or they may offer new experiences.

At Queen Boudica all the children take part in a key stage musical **production** once a year where every single child will take some part – singing, dancing or acting etc. EYFS and KS1 children perform a Nativity at Christmas, Y3/4 children put on a carol concert in the local church and the Y5/6 children put on a production at the end of the school year. Other assemblies will involve classes or the whole school during the year eg. an Easter Assembly, Leavers' Assembly and a special year group assembly once a year.

The **grounds of the school** are a real asset and we make the most of the surroundings and facilities to enrich and enhance children's learning. This also extends to the immediate locality of Highwoods Country Park which provides a rich environmental learning resource.

Teachers are encouraged to ‘**think outside of the box**’. It is only by ‘taking risks’ that we can ensure our curriculum is exciting, challenging and motivating.

How do we adapt our curriculum to meet different needs?

To ensure every child works towards achieving his/her full potential our curriculum is inclusive and based on high expectations. Learning is structured and paced so that it builds on what children already know and identifies next steps. Children should know what is to be learned, how this will happen and why they are learning a particular skill, concept or piece of knowledge. Children are provided with relevant learning experiences and suitably challenging work. All children have the opportunity to achieve, including children from different social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, boys and girls, children with learning difficulties and disabilities, also gifted and talented children.

Overall we follow the age related programmes of study for each subject. Some children may be working below these expectations or above them. Children’s individual needs are met through differentiation and possibly special timetabling arrangements. Where occasionally children may be withdrawn for interventions, we are mindful that they are still entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum.

The specifics of how and why the curriculum may need to be adapted are provided in the Learning and Teaching Policy, the Special Education Needs Policy and the Gifted and Talented Policy, also other curriculum policies.

How do we timetable our curriculum?

The initial stage of timetabling is determining the total time available for teaching – the number of weeks in the school year and the length of the school day, which varies for different key stages. Curriculum subject time allocation is based on **36 weeks being allocated to each subject** and in a school year (38 weeks) this leaves the equivalent of two more weeks that can be devoted to production preparation, performances, educational visits and other special events.

| Length of School Week (teaching hours, exclusive of registration, collective worship, breaks and lunch) | |
|--|-----------------------|
| FS/KS1 – 21 hours 30 minutes | KS2 – 23 hours |

Curriculum priorities for the term determine exactly how much time is spent in each term on teaching different subjects. Over the year a balance of time devoted to each subject should be reached.

Good learning and teaching depend on flexible time allocations and effective use of time. Different subjects and types of lessons require different amounts of time. It should be noted that there are no statutory time allocations for National Curriculum subjects. Lesson lengths may often vary between key stages and subjects for a number of reasons. As previously stated, priority is given to literacy and mathematics and, while this always remains the case, we do ensure children receive a broad and balanced education where excellence and enjoyment, and high standards are always the focus.

Working within the context that a balance of time is devoted to each subject, teachers are free to decide their own timetable and this may vary from week to week or term to term. The following principles are applied:

- there will usually be daily English and mathematics lessons, where the structure is flexible and meets the needs of children;
- PE must be taught every week;
- computing will be taught as a discrete subject where necessary and should enhance learning and teaching throughout the curriculum;
- ‘exploRE - Essex agreed syllabus for Religious Education’ (2015) states that, ‘ In order to cover the content specified in the programme of study for Key Stage 1 in a meaningful way, the equivalent of at least 40 minutes of curriculum time per week should be devoted to RE ... and the equivalent of 50 minutes at Key Stage 2’

How do we approach learning and teaching?

At Queen Boudica we believe our children will learn best when they are:

- Happy and want to come to school to learn
- Interested and motivated
- Achieving success
- Able to understand what they are learning and why they are learning it
- Behaving well
- Challenged and stimulated
- Feeling secure and understand that making mistakes is an important part of learning

We aim:

- for children to understand what they have learnt, what they are learning and what they are going to learn (and can make the links between these elements)
- to provide challenging activities which encourage and motivate children to “have a go”
- to ensure that every child achieves and “moves on”
- for children to feel safe, secure and enjoy their learning
- to recognise that learning is diverse and can happen in planned and unplanned contexts – we value all learning
- to develop the whole child: that is academically, physically, socially, emotionally, spiritually, morally and culturally
- to encourage and develop independent learning skills
- for children to develop a growth mindset in relation to their own learning

We believe that staff have a crucial role to play in ensuring we reach these aims. High expectations of all adults and consistency of approach are key to this. It has been agreed, through consultation, that the following approaches are to be adopted as ‘whole school’ strategies and pedagogy:

- the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL). For the benefit of this policy AfL is broadly considered as:
 - children need to understand what they are learning
 - children are given feedback so they can move on
 - children are fully involved in deciding what needs to be done next and what help will be provided
- teaching that caters for different learning styles e.g. visual, auditory and kinaesthetic
- regular investigational/open-ended activities which promote and develop thinking, enquiry and problem-solving
- practical ‘real life’ learning through providing opportunities for children to experience things first-hand
- learning that is matched to the needs and interest of the individual child
- collaborative learning experiences where children will work with different people and each other in a wide range of different contexts
- active speaking and listening opportunities e.g. role play, talk partners, Kagan teams
- providing extra support for children who need it, both within and beyond the school day
- providing appropriate equipment and resources to support and extend learning
- utilising opportunities for active outdoor learning
- ensuring children know how they are doing and encouraging, praising and rewarding their achievements

How do we value in our learning environment?

We aim to organise the school environment so that it is:

- purposeful and productive within classrooms
- challenging and stimulating
- possible to work both indoors and outdoors
- tidy and safe
- welcoming
- well-resourced
- accessible for all

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is reviewed annually by the school's Curriculum Development Leader.

The **Headteacher** ensures that the curriculum has aims and objectives which reflect those of the school and indicates how the needs of individuals will be met. In relation to this, it is the Headteacher's responsibility to consider where the needs of an individual may be more effectively met by temporary or permanent disapplication from the National Curriculum/EYFS.

All **staff** will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in line with this policy.

This policy should underpin our day-to-day work and will form an important part of our self-evaluation and monitoring processes. Environment walks, lesson observations, discussions with children, work sampling and governor/outside agency visits will all help us to monitor its effectiveness.

The **Governing Body** approves this policy and participates actively in forming the aims of the policy with regard to decision making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum, also curriculum aims. They will take into account the views of the staff when considering curriculum policy decisions. This decision making is carried out with regard to current national initiatives, the standards achieved by children in the school and in response to guidance and evidence on educational standards received from the Headteacher.

Planning formats and procedures are revised and amended as the needs of the school and staff change. All staff are encouraged to take part in this collaborative process in order to provide the curriculum which we believe all children are entitled to.

The following documents have informed much of the content of this policy:

'The National Curriculum for key stages 1 and 2' (DfE 2014)

'Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework' DfE (2012)

'exploRE - Essex agreed syllabus for Religious Education' (2015)

'Designing and timetabling the primary curriculum: a practical guide for key stages 1 and 2' (QCA 2002)