

River Bank Primary School

Curriculum Intent Statement

The principles of the curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact at River Bank Primary School closely align with those stated by Dylan Williams' Principled Curriculum Design (2013).

Balanced

Having a balanced curriculum is a priority for us at River Bank Primary School. The development of the core subjects of reading, writing and maths are essential to children. ***'These fundamental skills are important because they give pupils the foundations to develop in secondary school...Basic literacy is also important as it is essential for expression. Without basic literacy skills pupils will struggle to engage with subjects across the curriculum. Poor numeracy and literacy skills can have a huge knock-on effect on their wider education and the ability to get on in life. (The Education Hub 2016).***

The acquirement of knowledge and skills associated with these subjects, however, should not come at the expense of other non-core subject curriculum areas; and where possible, these subjects should work together to effectively imbed material.

We understand that different children are inspired by different curriculum areas: that area which they truly love engaging in and learning about. As Robinson, K, puts it – their 'element'. At River Bank Primary School, we are committed to helping each child find this 'element' (Robinson, K) and are keen to nurture and develop this in just as committed way as the core subject of Reading, writing and maths. ***'...too often, we focus on the things that we need to do to find employment, or things we are good at, but these are not inherently fulfilling. Real personal fulfilment comes from finding what one's personal passions are – in other words, being in one's element.'*** (Robinson, K, *The Element*)

At our school we want to see children achieve their potential in the core subjects and we are relentless in helping children achieve that potential. However, we also want our children to have their potential fulfilled in the art which they create; the history which they learn; and the physical activity which they engage in. We want to help educate and inspire future painters, computer programmers, drama teachers, writers, mathematicians and dancers in an ever- changing world where they can live rich and fulfilled lives that serve society with credit .

At River Bank Primary School, our Intent and Implementation reflects this through:

- i. Non-core subjects are not replaced by additional reading, writing or maths sessions
- ii. A discrete lesson approach to the delivery of all National Curriculum subjects to help sequence learning in a way that helps children remember more (subjects are not 'blocked', as this undermines the sequencing and can lead to a curriculum with breadth but not depth).
- iii. Two Physical Education lessons each week, of up to 2 hours (plus numerous, free after school sports and activity clubs that the children can sign up for).
- iv. A full and comprehensive curriculum that conforms to all National Curriculum statutory objectives
- v. Trips and experiences that support curriculum content that excite, inspire and provide positive memories for all children.
- vi. An optional 'Extended Day' offer (twice per week) for pupils in year 5 and 6 that gives additional time for gaps in core curriculum knowledge outside of the normal school day.

Rigorous

Rigour is at the heart of our curriculum. In the creation of our curriculum, we see National Curriculum subjects as not simply a sequence of knowledge or skills but as a discipline (William, D).

***'The word 'discipline' is important here because it denotes both a subject, and the commitment that is needed to acquire the ways of thinking emphasised by the subject.'* (William, D, Principled Curriculum Design)**

At River Bank Primary School, our curriculum intent and implementation are 'knowledge -rich' in their design. However, we have worked hard to ensure that it is not just a series of facts in a series of lessons.

Through mathematics we adopt the principles from NCTEM Maths Mastery: fluency, variation, coherence, representation and structure; and mathematical thinking. This encourages children to grapple and be excited with problems and calculations.

Through all our subjects our approach to learning new vocabulary, which is essential in the context of the children for whom we serve, follows a ***'Select, Explore, Explain, Consolidate'*** approach (Quigley, A, ***Closing the Vocabulary Gap***). We do not just want children to learn a series of words on a piece of paper, but understand both the morphology and etymology of words so that when a teacher and a dictionary are not around to tell them the meaning, they themselves, can attempt to ascertain it through strategies taught. We recognise the importance of words in the lives for our pupils now and in the future and we want these pupils to be excited by words; we want to use new words correctly and creatively. We want the words that they learn to both inspire themselves and others when they use those words in a creative order of their own choosing.

In history, the context of a time period, an event, or a person's actions are developed alongside the discrete knowledge. The impact of an event such as the Normandy landings, goes beyond 160,000 allied soldiers, landing and moving through France in 1944 – it marked one of the key points of a war, in which the allied forces were finally able to start liberating western Europe from Nazi occupation. Here, both knowledge and content combine to tell a history of courage, sacrifice, duty and ultimately hope. ***'We can teach history as if it is about facts and dates or we can teach history as an epistemic apprenticeship into a discipline of history involving facts and dates and understanding bias in historical sources and chronology and cause and effect.'* (Claxton, 2013)**

At River Bank Primary School, our Intent and Implementation reflects this through:

- i. Having teachers who teach beyond facts, figures and dates but also consider the wider concepts around them.
- ii. Ensuring that staff training is teaching and learning focused based on research findings
- iii. Facilitating a culture where curriculum leaders are expected to be experts in their subjects; keeping up to date with research and findings and to disseminate this to staff.
- iv. Ensuring that curriculum leaders have regular time each half-term in order to monitor their subject content, delivery and impact
- v. Having senior leaders that help train curriculum leaders in regular, timetabled meetings

Coherent

At River Bank Primary School much thought and research has been given to ensure that our curriculum is coherent. William, D, describes coherence as ***'the totality of experiences mutually re-inforc(ing) each other'*** (William, D, ***Principled Curriculum Design***). Skills, knowledge and subjects are

taught in a way whereby links are made so that content in one subject is *connected* and built upon in others. ***'This is important because unless explicit connections are made between the different experiences young people encounter in school, they are likely to see them as unconnected.'*** (William, D, *Principled Curriculum Design*)

An example of this in the designed curriculum at River Bank School would be how the water-cycle taught in science has serious implications when considering climate change and the effect on flooding taught in other curriculum areas such as English and geography.

A further example being how the recount of Earnest Shackleton's expedition to the South Pole is an example of values such as determination, courage and selflessness, which are covered in PSHE.

Additionally, once pupils have grasped the concepts of mean, median, mode and range – they can use these skills to analyse traffic data, which can then be used to comment on its effect on the environment and what mitigation we as humans may chose to do to help.

This coherence ensures that the limitations of children's short-term memory is supported by well-practiced learned knowledge across different curriculum areas.

This coherence is vital when considering the intent and implementation of our teaching of reading.

- i. Children are taught synthetic phonics (Read, Write, Inc) on entry into Early Years
- ii. Children are grouped in reception, year 1 and year 2 according to their phonological knowledge, whereby new sounds are introduced and built upon
- iii. Children have carefully selected home-reading books that consolidate upon sounds learned.
- iv. Guided reading begins in year 2 (and continues through to year 6), once children are secure in their sounds. These sessions develop comprehension, verbal reasoning and literacy knowledge.
- v. Texts for guided reading are planned carefully, using the Accelerated Reader book grading to ensure pitch and suitability.
- vi. Ensuring that guided reading incorporates a wide variety of text types that serve to deepen other curriculum areas being studied.
- vii. Ensuring that children who have not got a good grasp of their sounds are supported beyond year 2 to ensure that they are learned.
- viii. Offer an extensive variety of home-reading books, carefully curated to consider both reading enjoyment and the cultural capital of the school
- ix. Ensuring that vocabulary is introduced and taught, using the ***'Select, Explain, Explore, Consolidate'*** process (Quiqley, A, *Closing the vocabulary gap*).

In addition to reading, our Intent and Implementation of coherence reflects this through:

- I. Designing a curriculum that builds upon knowledge and skills learned and connects it to other meaningful knowledge.
- II. Ensuring each lesson contains an aspect of retrieval practise that checks the understanding of key knowledge and skills, thereby helping children to remember more and free up more of the short-term memory.

Vertically Integrated

The knowledge and skills that are taught across individual subjects across the different year groups are sequenced in a way where there is a clear progression in the taught material: where new learning and skills are built upon previous ones. ***'In other words, it needs to be clear how material taught at one point in time builds upon materials taught earlier, and feeds into what is to be taught later.'*** (William, D, *Principled Curriculum Design*)

In order to achieve this, we have created a long-term plan, which gives opportunity to both regularly remind children of what has been taught and build upon that material with new knowledge and skills. This is supported by medium term plans that identify the key knowledge and skills that is to be taught, which clearly builds upon the material prior. Each subject leader has worked with senior leaders to ensure that this is as effectively sequenced to help children remember more. The development and refining of these plans are continuous from year to year.

Short-term plans are then constructed from the medium-term plans, which all contain:

- i. A retrieval element, to help consolidate prior learning, helping to move material from short-term to long term memory.
- ii. A taught-vocabulary element (where appropriate) using the 'Select, Explain, Explore, Consolidate' section.
- iii. Material broken up into small-steps in order to reduce cognitive load and help children to remember more.
- iv. Independent learning tasks that match the teachers' input and allow for consolidation and application of that material.

All of this helps to ensure that our teachers not only are clear on what is to be taught, but what it is being built upon and what will be built upon it in the future. This clarity, drives learning of material forward, which helps children to remember more.

In addition to this, teachers have PPA together to ensure collaboration as part of the planning process.

Appropriate

At River Bank Primary School, extensive thought on the intent and implementation around how appropriate our curriculum is to our children has been given.

One of the core characteristics of our school is that we have a large number of pupils attending whose heritage originates from far across the globe. Furthermore, there is a high mobility of pupils who join us year-on-year, which adds to this rich cultural capital.

This is something we consider to be an incredible blessing. It allows children to witness some of the rich diversity of our world; practise personal values in meaningful situations, which subsequently helps prepare them for an ever-changing, diverse world.

This celebration of our diverse community is evident in:

- i. The texts and authors whom we explore with the children in English, guided reading and other curriculum areas
- ii. The thematic topics which we cover in our curriculum
- iii. The assemblies which we deliver, which cover a wide diversity of festivals, British Values and important people

- iv. The wide variety and diversity of sporting activities which we offer to boys and girls
- v. The wide variety and diversity of after-school clubs which we offer,
- vi. Carefully planned and sequenced learning for Black History Month
- vii. Carefully planned and sequenced music lessons (including the regular playing of instruments) delivered by Luton Music Service

This variety and diversity clearly extends to the children's knowledge and skills. Due to this, much thought is given to the intent and implementation of how we develop this appropriately.

- i. In phonics, children are grouped according to their knowledge of sounds across EYFS, year 1 and year 2
- ii. For children who have not learned all of their sounds, in KS2 they are grouped together to take part in the 'Fresh Start' phonics programme to ensure that existing gaps do not remain.
- iii. For all other subjects (including all core subjects), children are grouped in mixed-ability.
- iv. Children with SEND are engaged with the classroom's teaching as much as is possible and beneficial (according to a clear support plan).
- v. Children in year 6, who are significantly behind where they should be (including some who are given a school place late in their primary years) are placed in smaller groups with the DHT for maths and English to ensure progress at a suitable pace.
- vi. All children in year 5 and year 6 are offered 'Extended Day' places to support gaps in phonics, reading or maths.

Focused

At River Bank Primary School, we have worked hard on our curriculum design to ensure that it is focused. That it has to a breadth and depth that is not only engaging and inspiring for the children, but manageable for the teachers delivering it. A curriculum intent and implementation should not be **'a mile wide and an inch deep'** (Schmidt, McKnight, & Raizen, 1997). Much work on our curriculum has been about what should be included alongside what should not.

Our medium-term planning also highlights material we consider essential amongst the other important material. This material is assessed at the end of each unit to ascertain the impact of the curriculum.

This process has been led by the curriculum leaders and decided collaboratively with other leaders across the school. Each year, this content is reviewed and refined.

Relevant

At River Bank Primary School, we are keen for pupils to see the relevance of each subject and the materials within it for themselves.

From each of the previous areas of our curriculum design, it is evident that leaders and teachers give much thought to the intent and implementation of the material to be taught. However, in making it further relevant to children the implementation is extended beyond the material and to the actual craft and art of teaching; the manner in which the teachers **'...connect valued outcomes to the students in front of them.'** (William, D, *Principled Curriculum Design*)

The development of teachers and other adults across the school is vital towards achieving this. At River Bank Primary School, our Intent and Implementation reflects this through:

- I. Focused staff briefings (twice per week) in which the content is primarily of a teaching and learning nature

- II. Focused staff meetings in which the content is primarily of a teaching and learning nature.
- III. An ethos of being 'research led' across the school to all curriculum leaders, teachers and support staff
- IV. Protected time (and additional time if requested) for leaders to observe their curriculum areas being taught across the school; speak to children about the impact of their curriculum design; research into updates about their curriculum areas; and resource lessons well.
- V. Having a supportive senior leadership team with 'high expectations and low threat' in order to help mentor and develop teachers in order to help them teach effectively.

These actions, alongside others, help our teachers teach material in a way that is engaging, interesting and motivating for pupils. We want our children to experience the subject being taught in an authentic way, and not just in a narrow set of pre-determined facts.

Other ways in which we achieve that at our school is by:

- I. Offering regular trips and visits that have been carefully chosen and planned to help children experience authentic aspects of the curriculum being studied. Children visit the seaside; have open-top bus tours around the key landmarks in London; have VR experiences of the South Pole; have the opportunity to attend two residential trips; engage in many local walks and visit many religious buildings.
- II. Ensuring that material within our curriculum areas is relevant to their own interests and helps our pupils be good citizens of the future. Focused content on climate change, plastic waste; looking at key figures from different cultures, ages, and gender all help to foster a curriculum which our pupils enjoy and are inspired by.
- III. Ensuring that our curriculum material meaningfully explores the relevance of our town of Luton and the surrounding area including the changes in Luton over time; some of key geographical and economic features of Luton and the surrounding area; the celebration of carnival and what that means to a diverse community; the history of Luton; and the ways in which we, as citizens, can help look after Luton.

By ensuring that our curriculum intent and implementation follows these principles, then we will have created a curriculum which is:

- Ambitious for all pupils;
- Coherently planned and sequenced;
- Successfully adapted. Designed and developed for pupils with special educational needs and / or disabilities;
- Broad and balanced for all pupils

The effect of this will help see us, as a school, serve and invest in each and every child who attends River Bank Primary School to the best that we can; creating learning experiences that inspire - which helps develop learners who are inspiring.

