

BEECHWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

BEECHWOOD CURRICULUM 2023: FOUNDATIONS AND KEY PRINCIPLES

At Beechwood, the curriculum is rooted in the school's underlying **aims, ethos and values**. It is carefully and explicitly designed to equip our pupils with the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that will both prepare them for the next stage in their education and enable them to live successful lives in the future.

We aim to:

- Deliver a broad and balanced curriculum based on clearly identified knowledge, skills and understanding;
- Cater for individual learning needs;
- Encourage an understanding of commonality and a respect for difference;
- Cultivate a questioning, critical attitude;
- Nurture a love of learning and a thirst for knowledge;
- Stimulate and develop creative thinking;
- Develop pupils' understanding of our society and the core values upon which it is based;
- Develop pupil's understanding and appreciation of and engagement with the wider world;
- Help pupils make choices which will contribute towards their physical and mental well-being.

A clear **ethos** with underlying **values** supports the delivery of these aims in a curriculum which is designed to deliver and promote:

- An entitlement to high quality teaching and learning in all subjects and for all pupils;
- A visible celebration of diversity;
- An extended sense of community based on understanding, respect and tolerance;
- A strong role for pupil voice in leading research and enquiry into areas of personal interest;
- Learning which is enjoyable, engaging and challenging;
- Learning which is relevant to our pupil's past, present and future lives.

These intentions give rise to a set of essential principles upon which the design and organisation of our curriculum is based;

High quality daily teaching of the core skills of English and mathematics

We view the development of competence in English and mathematics as a fundamental entitlement for all pupils. These subjects are basic life skills upon which access to the rest of the curriculum is predicated. English and mathematics are taught in both subject specific and cross curricular contexts. There is a guarantee of personalised intervention programmes at group or individual level for all pupils falling below nationally expected levels.

The explicit development of pupils' creative skills

There is purposeful and systematic development of the creative element of all subjects. We believe that creative skills are essential for our pupils; both as a mechanism of empowerment, enabling them to think creatively about their own futures and potentialities and in relation to the needs of a rapidly changing world of work, life and leisure. A high profile is given to the creative arts, both for their own intrinsic value; for example, as a means of self-expression, the exploration of ideas and the engenderment of mental well-being, and for the contribution they can make to cross- curricular study.

A key role for research and enquiry

The curriculum is designed to stimulate curiosity, equip pupils with the skills to pursue lines of research into areas of personal interest and allow them the time to do so. The purposeful development of these transferable learning skills enables pupils to engage with learning as something directly relevant to their own interests and concerns and allows them to function effectively in a variety of different learning contexts, thus developing the confidence to move beyond the known and to intellectually embrace the unfamiliar.

Learning that is meaningful, relevant and enjoyable

Learning is embedded in contexts which are engaging and relevant to pupils; both real life or imaginary, in order to stimulate personal engagement and the motivation to explore further. Extended units of cross-curricular study provide a coherence to the investigation of themes and subjects and an opportunity for deeper immersion in knowledge and ideas.

An extended concept of curriculum provision

Pupils learn in a variety of different places and with a variety of different teachers. Off-site delivery, visiting experts, day and residential visits and use of the outside classroom and local environment are common features of provision, to both ensure that children are exposed to the very best practitioners and educators and to reinforce a concept of learning that transcends the boundaries of the classroom and the school.

An awareness of community at local, national and international level.

Pupils of all ages develop an understanding of the different aspects of community. They explore the relevance of different communities to themselves and the contribution that they can make to each, both immediately and in the future, developing a growing sense of the benefits and responsibilities of local, national and international citizenship and an understanding of the personal and social enrichment that such engagement can bring.

The development of social and emotional literacy

The curriculum affords continuous opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of self and a growing understanding of the relation of self to others. A sense of self-esteem and personal identity is linked to respect for the rights of others.

We prioritise the teaching of key skills through **daily teaching of Maths and English**. The context for work across much of the rest of the curriculum is through an annual cycle of **Thematic Study Units**. These are primarily structured around Geography and History, but involve other subjects as well; particularly Art, Design Technology, cross-curricular writing and ICT. These units form the basis for a termly unit of work. Other subjects, such as Music, PE and PSHCE are taught as **discrete units on a weekly timetabled basis**.

Whether subjects are delivered in the context of cross curricular themes or as discrete subjects, emphasis is placed on the preservation of **subject level rigour**. Learning is frequently contextualised in thematic study, but we are careful to ensure that this does not lead to the dilution of subjects into an amorphous blend of 'topic', where the distinctiveness of different disciplines is lost.

We have evolved a clear **progression in knowledge, understanding and skills** for each area of the curriculum, which sets out the sequential elements of **learning intent** in each subject. A clear rationale for the selection of the component elements of **the identified body of knowledge, the key ideas and the order of teaching and acquisition** is set out in the **statement of intent** for each subject.

This results in the progressive layering of a cumulative body of knowledge in each identified strand in each curriculum area, which continually references and builds upon past learning. For example, in the teaching of History, the concept of democracy is developed over time in multiple contexts. The study of Nelson Mandela's experiences in Apartheid **South Africa (Y2)** raises awareness of a period in recent world history where democratic rights have been compromised and the impact this has had on the lives of individuals and groups in one particular country. The study of Ancient Egypt **(Y3)** builds awareness of the exercise and abuse of power in the absence of democracy and the roots of Western democracy are explored in the study of **Ancient Greece (Y4)**. Nazi rule in war time Germany **(Y5)** reveals the extreme implications of the usurping of democratic rights. Pupils' understanding is extended through examination of the revolutionary struggles of **France (Y6)** and culminates the comparison and evaluation of different forms of government in **Past, Present and Future (Y6)**.

Alongside a **core curriculum entitlement**, the interests of pupils are vitally important in shaping each Thematic Study Unit, and class, group and individual lines of **pupil-initiated enquiry** are developed. Extensive use of visits and visitors informs TSU work and extends learning beyond the classroom. As the school gives high status to skills of **creativity** and **research and enquiry**, hierarchical skills progressions have been evolved for each of these areas.

Knowledge, understanding and skills are systematically layered into each Thematic Study Unit through our medium term planning structure, which is comprised of three levels; **medium term plans a, b and c**. These provide the mechanism for ensuring that intent is translated into comprehensive and effective delivery at classroom level.

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