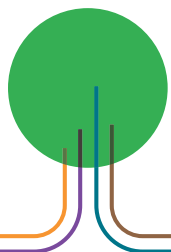


A Curriculum Framework for Quality Education

3 CASE STUDIES



*the Curriculum
Foundation*

SCHOOL NAME: MIDDLETON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rationale for curriculum review and redesign: The senior leadership team felt that there was a need for the curriculum to be more cohesive and that it should better represent the needs and interests of the school community. Although there were many examples of good curriculum plans and learning experiences, there was a lack of consistency particularly in relation to pedagogy, and high-quality teaching.

KEY ACTIONS:

1. Initial audit and Intent

The work started with a discussion with all teachers considering the key question:

‘What is the purpose of education?’

‘What does the entitlement of all pupils to quality education look like?’

This led to discussions around:

‘What is it like for pupils to live in Middleton?’

This supported teachers to define the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to adequately prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain.

Part of this process involved teachers using the National Curriculum whilst recognising that this should only form part of their curriculum, and led to the addition of further strands and topics to meet the needs and interest of pupils in Middleton.

2. Curriculum framework

To help consolidate all of the ideas discussed during this initial audit, a curriculum framework was devised which brought together key aspects of curriculum design to help shape more detailed planning.

Golden Threads: These are key issues which were felt to be so important that they needed to run through all areas of the curriculum. Human Values for example and developing social and emotional learning are considered to be essential aspects of all learning and should therefore be planned into all lessons in some way.

Generic competencies: Being able to communicate and cooperate effectively, think critically and creatively were also considered essential aspects of all learning. Teachers felt that these competencies combined with developing self-regulation were key features of what enabled all children to succeed, particularly in relation to approaching new areas of learning with ‘optimistic’ attitudes.

Curriculum Subjects: The sense that curriculum subjects should form a rich diet of learning was a strong theme in plans for curriculum development. In addition to the aims of the National Curriculum, PSHCE, Outdoor Learning, Enterprise and Current Affairs are thought to be valuable areas of learning which contribute significantly to a sense of authenticity and purpose across the curriculum.

Our Local Context: Teachers believe that by rooting learning in the local context, pupils are more likely to see the relevance of what they are learning, making connections between what they already know and what they would like to explore further. Features of the Middleton locality

such as its proximity to Leeds and the vast green space to the rear of the school, provides some inspiration for learning and a sense of relevance.

By combining elements of each of these four aspects of the curriculum at every planning stage, teaching and learning is believed to most effectively support all pupils reach the intended aims of the curriculum.

3. Implementation

To support the implementation of the curriculum framework, members of the Curriculum Foundation team worked alongside teachers in the classroom to design and deliver lessons that reflected all areas of the framework. Staff meetings paid particular attention to planning for progression so that pupils were effectively building on prior learning and making authentic links between subjects.

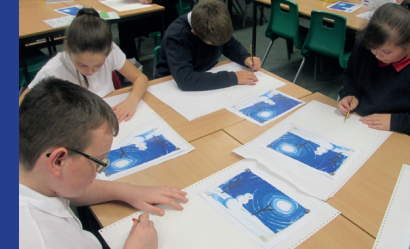
4. Coaching the leadership team

A coaching programme ran alongside this work and complemented the development of senior leaders in understanding their accountabilities for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the effectiveness of the curriculum framework to maximise the impact on teaching and learning. This also explored the required leadership behaviours, unpicked values and developed confidence to lead and manage.

IMPACT

‘Working with The Curriculum Foundation really inspired our staff – enabling us to deliver a more creative curriculum with real and relevant cross curricular links. The impact of this can be seen in the quality of lessons that have been delivered and in the learning behaviour (and general behaviour) of our children. Children are ‘hooked’ into their learning - a recent walk around by a national leader in education commented on the good behaviour in every classroom - ‘Engagement in learning across the school is good. Behaviour is excellent.’

Samantha Williams, Head Teacher.



Subjects and area of learning

National Curriculum and our personalised school curriculum are fused together.

Including:
PSHCE; Enterprise;
Outdoor Learning;
Current Affairs.



Golden Threads

Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural development

Human Values - Authentic Learning - Safety and Inclusion - Global Learning

Middleton Primary School Curriculum Aims

We aim for all of our children to be:

Successful lifelong learners who aim to excel in everything they do.

Healthy, happy and confident individuals who enjoy problem solving and working creatively.

Ambitious individuals who are committed to perseverance and exploration.

Good citizens who value honesty, equity and democracy.



Generic Competencies

Communication - Co-operation - Self-regulation - Critical and Creative thinking

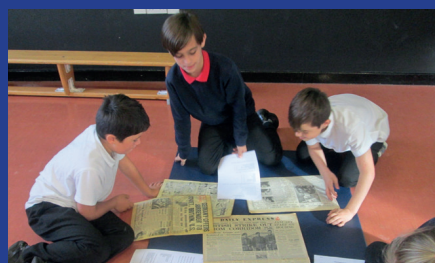
Local Context

Our children and their families

Our stakeholders

Our locality

Our history



SCHOOL NAME: COPMANTHORPE PRIMARY SCHOOL, YORK.

Rationale for curriculum review and redesign: The Head Teacher requested support to work with the whole school community to better identify and define features of a curriculum for quality education. The SLT agreed that although Teaching and Learning at the school was generally at least 'good', opportunities were being missed in some places to capitalise on what is achieved through enrichment and community activities and events.

KEY ACTIONS:

1. Defining 'curriculum'

Building on the attendance of the Head Teacher at a regional curriculum event, the Curriculum Foundation delivered a half-day workshop in school at the beginning of the school year to all teachers and teaching assistants. During this workshop, there were discussions about what was meant by the term 'curriculum', which resulted in an agreed definition of **'Everything that happens in the school plus everything that takes place through the school.'**

This definition meant that a value should be placed on things which might have been previously considered 'extra-curricular', such as community events, national days and school visits. Staff agreed that rich experiences such as these make a significant contribution to the progress pupils make towards curriculum aims, but that they needed to be better incorporated into curriculum plans for their impact to be assessed more effectively.

In order to better connect the curriculum to these descriptions of Modern Britain and the needs and interests of the local community, the SLT also invited parents to a facilitated workshop where similar questions were asked about the purpose of education. The combined outcomes of these consultations with staff and parents were used to add detail to the school mission and further inform curriculum plans. Key phrases from parents and staff about modern Britain were as follows:

Rapidly changing and unpredictable; highly connected; diverse; multi-cultural; environmentally unstable; socially challenging; technological; opportunistic; problematic; unequitable.

A subsequent meeting with the SLT further explored in detail these responses from which the team began to shape a curriculum framework that could support a holistic approach to implementing the curriculum.

2. Clarifying curriculum intent

During this initial half-day workshop, teachers and teaching assistants also considered in some detail their school mission statement: 'To inspire confident, resilient learners who will thrive throughout their lives.' There was an agreement that in order to effectively prepare pupils to 'thrive', the curriculum needed to reflect the characteristics of an increasingly globalised world and modern Britain.

3. Deepening an understanding of the National Curriculum and the opportunities for a bespoke curriculum

During a second workshop with all teachers, key features of the National Curriculum were examined, paying particular attention to the overall aims of the curriculum and the aims of each subject.

Teachers recognised that learning activities need to be carefully designed in order to allow for pupils to develop subject knowledge and skills, as well as generic skills such as cooperation, which are important for their wellbeing and confidence.

There was a recognition that it is beneficial to consider the wider aims of each curriculum subject (purpose of study) in order to gain a good foundation for what/how/why we teach each subject.

An understanding was developed of the opportunities that the NC provides based on the fact that it only forms part of our school curriculum. 'The National Curriculum is just one part of the education of every child.' (National Curriculum Aims 3.2) The DFE Activity Passports (Published December 2018) for example, can give us some good ideas for 'enrichment' but we are also free to reject these if they do not make a positive contribution to the development of a subject or our overall aims and learning focus for children in our class.

4. Deepening an understanding

Having examined the aims of curriculum subjects, considered the views of stakeholders in relation to the intent of the curriculum and identified key features of effective curriculum implementation, the SLT created a framework which they believed would summarise what was trying to be achieved through the curriculum and how these aims could be reached.

The following four curriculum perspectives were chosen: Rooting learning in our local context (ensuring that learning is familiar, relevant, offers an emotional connection but looks to broaden horizons); Golden threads (themes and issues which are so important that they must be developed across the curriculum); Curriculum subjects and areas of learning (the National Curriculum and beyond, as well as key concepts and 'big ideas' that are domain specific as well as cross-curricular); Assessment for Learning (a focus on classroom-based ongoing assessment).

IMPACT

'Working with Vikki throughout this year has helped focus and drive our curriculum development. Having a framework has enabled us to sharpen the purpose of our teaching, whilst also giving teachers permission to explore and build upon 'the unexpected' and/or seize upon opportunities that spark the interests of our children. I truly believe that the curriculum framework will allow us to continue to build on our 'core purpose' to 'inspire confident, resilient learners who thrive throughout their lives' through a curriculum that releases the beauty of all subjects and prepares our children well for the next stage of their education.'

Jenny Rogers, Head Teacher.



SCHOOL NAME: ST. JOSEPH & ST. BEDE R.C PRIMARY SCHOOL, BURY.

Rationale for curriculum review and redesign: The HT attended a World-Class Curriculum workshop provided by The Curriculum Foundation for a group of schools in the region. Based on curriculum design principles discussed during this workshop, the Head Teacher contacted The Curriculum Foundation subsequently to continue a more detailed programme of work to identify the features of curriculum design and intent that were appropriate for the school specifically. The Head Teacher was particularly keen to help all teachers recognise a framework for the curriculum which promoted creativity, breadth and challenge, whilst maintaining a sense of balance, ensuring that all learning experiences were of a high quality.

KEY ACTIONS:

1. Considering the experiences of pupils in Modern Britain

To begin the curriculum review process, teachers discussed the experiences of pupils in their community and in the wider region. Key elements of pupils' day-to-day experiences were identified as well as key influences on the school community from the 'wider world'. Teachers agreed that pupils are experiencing a period of rapid change, with several dramatic world events dominating headlines in recent times. Social media was particularly cited as a leading aspect of the lens through which pupils view the world. With the rising frequency of 'fake news', exaggerated viewpoints and narrow descriptions of events etc, teachers agreed that the curriculum needed to essentially, effectively prepare pupils to navigate their world critically and with increasing agility.

2. Defining competencies for lifelong learning

In order for all pupils to be effectively equipped to navigate and thrive in their world, teachers discussed the need for certain key skills to be developed across the curriculum in increasingly complex contexts. These skills were further defined to be competencies so that crucial elements of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes could be combined to ensure competence. After a lively

discussion, the following competencies were selected to run throughout the curriculum: Innovation so that pupils learn how to work creatively with what they know to develop new things; Self-Regulation so that pupils develop a range of coping strategies to work effectively in a variety of situations, deepening their self-awareness and strengthening their empathy for others; Co-operation so that pupils experience the benefits of working well with others and further develop their capabilities to collaborate in unfamiliar contexts; Communication so that pupils are able to read, write, speak and listen in such a way that they are able to learn effectively from others as well as present their own ideas coherently, with confidence.

3. Agreeing boundaries whilst setting the curriculum free

A feature of discussions about curriculum implementation centred around concerns about overloading the curriculum so that learning experiences lacked focus and coherence. Teachers looked in some detail at the intended outcomes of the 2014 National Curriculum and discussed the extent to which this should only form part of their school curriculum. In the foundation subjects, the scope of each subject was recognised to be quite minimal. Teachers also described, however, the perception that there was 'too much to do', particularly in upper Key Stage 2. A curriculum

framework was presented as a way of providing teachers with some guidelines from which decisions could be made about teaching and learning beyond and within the National Curriculum. A framework would allow teachers to ensure that all decisions about learning experiences would support children to work towards the overall aims of the curriculum. This meant that new opportunities could be explored ('setting the curriculum free') whilst also potentially reducing 'overload' where experiences did not truly reflect key features ('boundaries') of the curriculum as described in the framework.

4. Using the 5 Ws and our local context to shape a bespoke curriculum

Having examined the aims of curriculum subjects, considered the views of stakeholders in relation to the intent of the curriculum and identified key features of effective curriculum implementation, the SLT created a framework which they believed would summarise what was trying to be achieved through the curriculum and how these aims could be reached. The following four curriculum perspectives were chosen: Rooting learning in our local context (ensuring that learning is familiar, relevant, offers an emotional connection but looks to broaden horizons); Golden threads (themes and issues which are so important that they must be developed

across the curriculum); Curriculum subjects and areas of learning (the National Curriculum and beyond, as well as key concepts and 'big ideas' that are domain specific as well as cross-curricular); Assessment for Learning (a focus on classroom-based ongoing assessment).

IMPACT

'I feel that focusing on curriculum design and intent has really helped our teachers see the wood for the trees. It has ensured that we recognise our core non-negotiables when planning and it has enabled us to plan carefully without overwhelming teachers or compromising the quality of the curriculum.'

Jane Myerscough, Head Teacher.



Worship • Word • Witness • Welfare • Welcome



CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Gospel Values • Inclusion • Global Learning • SMSC



SUBJECTS

The essential knowledge to be educated, global citizens as set out in the National Curriculum.

Other aspects of knowledge, understanding & skills to reflect the needs & interests of our school community.

**All children succeed
as lifelong learners
within the love of
God.**

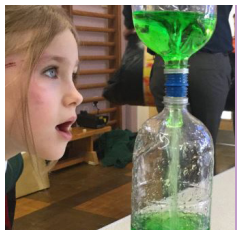
DREAM - BELIEVE - ACHIEVE

OUR SCHOOL CONTEXT

Catholic School

Diverse community

Strong links to industry,
transport and local heroes.



COMPETENCIES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Innovation • Self-Regulation • Co-operation • Communication

