

## **West Dean C.E. Primary Curriculum Policy Statement**

**This curriculum policy statement is under review following the disruption of the pandemic and the current headteacher's impending retirement.**

Throughout the partial school closure, the school and national curriculums were used as guidelines to secure the best learning possible in the circumstances. Children in school followed the same learning plans as those pupils who were being home educated. Despite best efforts of staff, pupils and their parents, the learning has been fragmented and we perceive a need to reunite classes and the whole school in learning.

Thus, the curriculum for the return to school in Autumn 2020 was planned separately as a whole school topic on trees, and growth. The whole school visited the arboretum in West Dean gardens and celebrated nature, learning and our school community. Each class used this 'topic' as a stimulus for the learning journey, adapting and interpreting it to act as a vehicle and purpose for reading, writing, maths and other curricular areas. Coverage previously planned for each year group was adapted as we assessed children's needs and began to plan a return to our curriculum.

Through the second partial closure in Spring 2021, the learning moved from our website class pages to the Google Classrooms, which enabled staff to develop home learning further. Staff are quite rightly proud of the quality of learning and the bespoke approach, which benefited so many children. Upon our return to full opening on March 8<sup>th</sup> 2021, we saw some fragmentation and disparity in learning experiences, despite the school's best endeavours to support the vulnerable and stretch pupils in their learning.

The initial four weeks before Easter were a vital time to reunite the school community and rebuild our learning behaviours (please refer to the parents' section of the website for more information on this). As the school does not use a 'bought in' curriculum, staff were able to adapt and design outstanding learning, where the whole school focused on:

**Week 1 - Book Week** - including World Book Day activities - a huge focus on reading for pleasure and meaning, whilst refreshing our writing skills.

**Week 2 - Let's Count** - The National Census - this was used as a vehicle for a focus on counting, the number system and reviewing calculations.

**Week 3 - Science and Technology Week** - the outdoors were used widely for work on pulleys, and children designed and made windmills to irrigate African crops or learnt about DNA and growing.

**Week 4** - Throughout Easter week, children learnt about Christianity and applied their learning in other subject areas.

Throughout this return to full opening, children were enabled to access learning through open ended learning with short burst activities to build stamina and support children in developing their independence and resilience once again. Our focus on mental health, and appropriate support and challenge, as staff assessed progress, gaps and needs, has resulted in a very positive return to learning. The creative nature of our school's curriculum enables staff to respond to local and national opportunities, cater for children's needs and interests and respond to the external impact of a pandemic.

The school will now devote itself to identifying gaps in coverage for individuals and groups, and to reviewing the curriculum to fulfil the needs as the nation recovers from the year's disruption.

The following document is up to date (March 2021) but will be reviewed alongside the Teaching for Learning Policy in 2021/2.

"Whatever the changes in education it is essential to remember that at the heart of the education process is the child. We strive to reflect this in the aims for our school and in our aspirations for every individual within the school" (School Mission Statement)

## **1 Introduction**

The curriculum is all the planned activities that we organise in order to promote learning and personal growth and development. It includes not only the formal requirements of the National Curriculum (2014), but also the range of extra-curricular activities that the school organises in order to enrich the experience of the children. It also includes the 'hidden curriculum', or what the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. We aim to teach children how to grow into positive, responsible people, who can work and co-operate with others while developing knowledge and skills, so that they achieve their true potential.

## **2 Values**

Our school curriculum is underpinned by the values that we hold dear.

The curriculum is the means by which the school achieves its objective of educating children in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to lead fulfilling lives.

Our school is in full agreement with the aims of the National Curriculum, and fulfils them by building them into our bespoke school curriculum, in order to best meet the needs of our learners.

These are the main values of our school, upon which we have based our curriculum:

- We value the way in which all children are unique, and our curriculum promotes respect for the views of each individual child, as well as for people of all cultures. We value the spiritual and moral development of each person, as well as their intellectual and physical growth.
- We value the importance of each person in our community. We organise our curriculum so that we promote co-operation and understanding between all members of our community.
- We value the rights enjoyed by each person in our society. We respect each child in our school for who they are, and we treat them with fairness and honesty. We aim to enable each person to be successful, and we provide equal opportunities for all the children in our school.
- We value our environment, and we aim, through our curriculum, to teach respect for our world, and how we should care for it for future generations, as well as our own.

## **3 Aims and Objectives**

The aims of our school curriculum are:

- to enable all children to learn and develop their skills to the best of their ability;
- to promote a positive attitude towards learning, so that children enjoy coming to school, and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning;
- to teach children the basic skills of literacy, numeracy, science and computing;
- to enable children to be creative and to develop their own thinking;

- to teach children about their developing world, including how their environment and society have changed over time;
- to help children understand Britain's cultural heritage;
- to enable children to be positive citizens in society;
- to fulfil all the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education;
- to teach children to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to understand right from wrong;
- to help children understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all;
- to enable children to have respect for themselves and high self-esteem, and to be able to live and work co-operatively with others.

#### 4 Curriculum Entitlement

Every pupil is entitled to:

- a curriculum which enables pupils to feel confident, valued and successful, and respect themselves and others as learners
- a curriculum which focuses on the core skills in English and Maths which underpin so many aspects of learning and life
- a curriculum which enables pupils to work together in a high-quality teaching and learning environment
- a curriculum which is broad, balanced, flexible, inclusive, and well-planned, and which is matched to individual need, providing the context for in-depth learning
- a curriculum which will enable pupils to make a significant contribution to their school community and the wider world
- a curriculum which provides continuity which is effective and supports progression and successful transition within and beyond the school

#### 5 Organisation and Planning

We plan our curriculum in three phases. We have an agreed, regularly reviewed, creative cross-curricular curriculum plan for the school identifying a long-term plan for each class. This indicates which topics are to be taught in each term, and to which groups of children.

Our **curriculum map** enable us to ensure coverage and progression while giving staff the flexibility to choose a learning or topic focus which best engages the children and maximises use of expertise and resources.

Our **medium-term plans** give clear guidance on the objectives, teaching strategies and time allocations for each topic. The plans also indicate links with other subjects, resources, expected outcomes and opportunities for assessment.

Our **short-term plans** are those that our teachers write on a weekly or daily basis. We use these to set out the learning objectives for each session, and to identify what resources and activities we are going to use in the lesson.

We adopt an **inter-disciplinary topic approach** to curriculum planning. We plan the curriculum carefully, so that there is coherence and full coverage of all aspects of the National Curriculum and the Early Learning Goals, and there is planned progression in all curriculum areas.

We may, if appropriate, teach subjects separately and as discreet modules of work. This means that, for example, a child may concentrate in one half- term on a history topic, then switch to a greater emphasis on geography in the second half. Increasingly we identify and take advantage of cross-curricula links for example: addressing literacy or numeracy objectives through science.

Over the three terms of the academic year, each child has the opportunity to experience the full range of National Curriculum subjects.

Further details can be found in our Teaching and Learning Policy.

Each summer term we have a **whole school focus topic** which lasts for several weeks and culminates in an Open/ Arts Evening or production to which all parents and children, Governors and friends of the school are invited.

## **6 Children with Additional Needs**

The curriculum in our school is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend the school. If we think it necessary to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of individual children, then we do so only after the parents of the child have been consulted.

Able pupils are identified and provided for through differentiated planning and teaching, and by our flexible class structuring.

If a child has a special need, our school does all it can to meet these individual needs. We comply with the requirements set out in the SEND Code of Practice in providing for children with special needs.

If a child displays signs of having special needs, his/her teacher makes an assessment of this need and this is discussed at regular review meetings ( 'School Action'). In most instances the teacher is able to provide resources and educational opportunities which meet the child's needs within the normal class organisation. Advice is sought from external agencies as necessary, sometimes by discussion with an Educational Psychologist. If a child's needs are more severe or complex, we consider the child for an EHCP (Education, Health & Care Plan), and we involve the appropriate external agencies when making this assessment. We always aim to provide additional resources and support for children with additional needs, and for their families.

The school provides an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for each of the children who have needs which require support additional or different to our usual classroom differentiation. This sets out the nature of the special need, and outlines how the schools will aim to address the need. It involves the pupil, parents and staff, ensuring that their views are captured. It also sets out targets for improvement, so that we can review and monitor the progress of each child at regular intervals.

## **7 The Early Years Foundation Stage**

The curriculum that we teach in the reception class meets the requirements set out in the National Curriculum at Foundation Stage. Our curriculum planning focuses on the Early Learning Goals and on developing children's skills and experiences, as set out in this document.

Our school fully supports the principle that young children learn through play, and by engaging in well- planned structured activities. Teaching in the reception year builds on the experiences of the children in their pre-school learning. Our learning journals are an ongoing record of the children's development and are available to staff, parents and children. They contain school and parent comments and observations and build on those set up in pre-school settings. We do all we can to build positive partnerships with the variety of nurseries and other pre-school providers in the area.

During the children's first term in the reception class, their teacher makes a baseline assessment to record the skills of each child on entry to the school and to confirm the judgements in the child's pre- school setting. This assessment

forms an important part of the future curriculum planning for each child and is part of their Foundation Stage profile. The teacher and teaching assistants have a system of on-going incidental and targeted observations and assessments which inform the end of Foundation Stage assessments.

## **8 Involving Parents**

We are well aware that all children need the support of parents and teachers to make good progress in school. We strive to build positive links with the parents of each child by keeping them informed about the way in which the children are being taught and how well each child is progressing. This begins in Reception and continues through the school.

Parents are informed of the curriculum focus for their child's class on a termly basis and are invited to support the planned learning by sharing their expertise or resources. We send out written information and hold parent information sessions at the beginning of the year/term and our entrance display also shares the learning with all visitors.

Parents are kept informed of their child's progress through regular parent teacher meetings and Electronic Report Books. Parents are made aware of their child's individual targets on a termly basis and of any extra support their child may be receiving.

## **9 Curriculum Development**

Curriculum areas requiring development are identified on an annual basis as part of our audit/school review. Test data, teacher knowledge and moderation information aid the selection of priorities for inclusion in the Development Plan. The whole school, staff and governors, are then involved in action planning, carrying out developments and review.

Each area for development has a member of staff whose responsibility it is to lead developments and keep up to date in the area. Subject leaders offer support to other staff and may teach other children in this area. They work closely with Governors, source or order resources for their subjects, make budget recommendations to the Business Manager/Headteacher, lead moderation, monitoring and development activities for their subjects, but this is carried out very much as a team, on a cyclical basis. The headteacher retains the responsibility for overseeing the monitoring of standards, teaching and learning throughout the school, in all subjects, supported by Governors, subject/aspect leaders and all other staff.

Our governing body is responsible for monitoring the way the school curriculum is implemented. They are aware of subject area review and development in-line with the agreed.

The headteacher is responsible for the day to day organisation of the curriculum. The headteacher is supported by the Curriculum Leaders in monitoring the long term curriculum, the medium term and weekly lesson plans for all teachers, ensuring that all classes are taught the full requirements of the National Curriculum, and that all lessons have appropriate learning objectives.

Updated: March 2021

**UNDER REVIEW FOLLOWING COVID-19 DISRUPTION (See opening paragraph) March 2021**