

Midsomer Norton Primary School

Curriculum Statement

Our definition of learning: a change in long-term memory

Our definition of progress: knowing and remembering more

Intent

Our curriculum is designed with five goals in mind:

- 1) To provide a carefully structured and knowledge-rich academic curriculum which is built around helping pupils to access wide ranging knowledge stored in their long term memory. We build our curriculum around powerful and culturally useful knowledge which changes pupils' perceptions and their understanding, as well as developing their values. We will ensure that pupils develop frameworks for gaining new knowledge which is embedded and retrieved easily, so that they can progress to expert outcomes and deepen their understanding.
- 2) To give pupils appropriate experiences to develop as caring, thoughtful and, responsible citizens.
- 3) To provide a rich 'cultural capital' in the knowledge of the world which prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. Through this, we develop the breadth of pupils' vocabulary so that they can express themselves maturely.
- 4) To be appealing and relevant to all children, providing a sense of belonging and an acknowledgement of the rich origins of modern society and its multi-ethnic routes-by origin we are all immigrants.
- 5) To develop an awareness of diversity as a breadth of experiences from individual to local to a global context that relate to ethnicity, class, gender and culture .To know about the contributions different societies, communities and individuals have made to human understanding and history.

We teach the national curriculum and our intentions for each subject area are defined by the purpose and aims of study of the national curriculum. The most important subject content is defined in our medium term plans through 'threshold concepts' which organise new knowledge systematically and ensure a logical progression to pupils' knowledge and understanding. We have defined end points through expected standards or milestones in learning by the end of each academic year, or in some subjects by the end of Year 2, Year 4 or Year 6. These milestones also assess the depth of understanding of the threshold concepts.

We prioritise reading across the curriculum by making sure that across all subjects pupils read texts which help them to broaden their vocabulary and deepen their understanding of the subject matter. We consider the ability to read with meaning as a basic and fundamental tool to ensure pupils' progress and to closing advantage gaps.

We have prioritised drivers to our curriculum breadth that shape our learning experiences, bring about the aims and values of our school, and to respond to the particular needs of our community. These are:

- **Community:** Our sense of identity and our place in the world; the history, geography and resources that make up of the local community, diversity within our communities, how our community fits into the larger community and how we engage and contribute to the community. Our role and responsibilities within our community. How, together, we can ensure a sustainable future.
- **Culture:** Building cultural capital – the cultural knowledge our children need to successfully navigate society throughout their lifetime. Developing the character of each child by helping them to appreciate cultural diversity, including beliefs and achievements in cultures beyond their own experience. Helping pupils to develop tolerance and challenge discrimination of any kind. Helping pupils to participate in and respond to the arts. Enabling pupils to understand the influences which have shaped their own cultural heritage.
- **Equality:** Ensuring our curriculum addresses issues of inequality and teaches children about the protected characteristics of: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Understanding, appreciating and celebrating difference. Developing our understanding of the experiences of, and the challenges faced by, others. Taking action to address inequality. Ensuring we are ambitious for all.

Recovery Curriculum

During the recovery period, we intend to maintain the breadth of the school curriculum. The need to prioritise supporting children's mental health, assessment and closing gaps necessitates a focus on key knowledge. Subject Leaders have identified the key knowledge that children missed during extended lockdown for teachers to cover through block teaching/ interleaving during the year.

School Closure/ Remote Learning

In the event of a further partial or full closure, teachers will continue to teach the national curriculum remotely including through the use of live sessions within the constraints of our current technology . Priority will be given to daily maths and English lessons. In all other subjects, teachers will use end of year revision materials to ensure that key knowledge and threshold concepts continue to be developed.

Implementation

Our curriculum is taught according to subject disciplinary knowledge, and making links between knowledge in subjects where appropriate. This helps us to focus on the most important and useful knowledge in each subject and to avoid distractions and irrelevances.

The curriculum breadth for each year group ensures each teacher has clarity as to what to cover. As well as providing the key knowledge within subjects it also provides for pupils' growing cultural capital and knowledge of the world.

We have identified in each subject the 'threshold concepts'. These are domain specific concepts which open up new ways of thinking about the subjects and help pupils to link new knowledge and commit it to their long term memories. We consider this to be the most powerful knowledge in each subject domain. Threshold concepts are the key disciplinary aspects of each subject. They are chosen to build conceptual understanding within subjects and are repeated many times in each topic. These concepts also help teachers to present new information clearly and build on what has been taught before.

We assess the depth of understanding and pupils' mastery to expertise in these concepts through milestones for learning. Each topic, each term, builds towards an expert outcome, or "POP" (proof of progress) task. These tasks check pupils' procedural knowledge, ie. their ability to apply and reason with knowledge. These assessments check the progression from novice to expert outcomes, called "Basic, Advancing and Deep" outcomes. These assessments are used to provide teachers with information for future planning. This helps to inform their future retrieval practice and the planning of tasks by identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge and their skill in the application of it.

Teachers provide plentiful opportunities for retrieval practice. Our short and medium term plans reflect the research of cognitive science, that progress means knowing more and remembering more. Therefore teachers use regular assessment in the form of low and no stakes quizzes and spaced practice and repetition of fundamental knowledge. Teachers assess and improve pupils' sustained memory through these low stakes methods as well as plenaries and mini-plenaries in lessons. Assessment, therefore answers two main questions: 'How well are pupils coping with curriculum content?' and 'How well are they retaining previously taught content?'

Teachers use worked examples and break tasks into component steps to avoid overloading pupils' working memory. Teachers expect pupils to solve problems and transfer their knowledge to new contexts when pupils have remembered the knowledge sufficiently.

Vocabulary is how pupils conceptualise and express knowledge. Teachers' plans prioritise the acquisition of knowledge through vocabulary. We prioritise reading through all curriculum plans, and building pupils' tier 2, or academic and literary vocabulary by access to challenging texts.

For pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities or those who need more time to embed fundamental knowledge, key knowledge deficits are identified and tasks planned which avoid overloading pupils' working memory. Retrieval and spaced practice of fundamental knowledge is a priority for these pupils. Teachers plan tasks where modelling and scaffolding of fundamental knowledge are additional provisions.

Impact

The impact of the curriculum on pupils' long term memory is checked by our subject leaders who undertake pupil conferencing each term to identify what pupils have learnt and remembered in each year group.

In addition, subject leaders check pupils' work each term to determine their progress in curricular goals and their depth of understanding.

The impact of our curriculum will be that by the end of each milestone, the vast majority of pupils have sustained mastery of the content, that is, they remember it all and are fluent in it, or have achieved an advancing stage of mastery.

Some pupils have a greater depth of understanding. We track carefully to ensure pupils are on track to reach the expectations of our curriculum.