





CURRICULUM POLICY

Date Reviewed	8 th December 2020
Signed Headteacher	
Signed Chair of Curriculum & Standards	
Date Revised	Autumn Term 2021

Curriculum Design: An Enquiry Approach

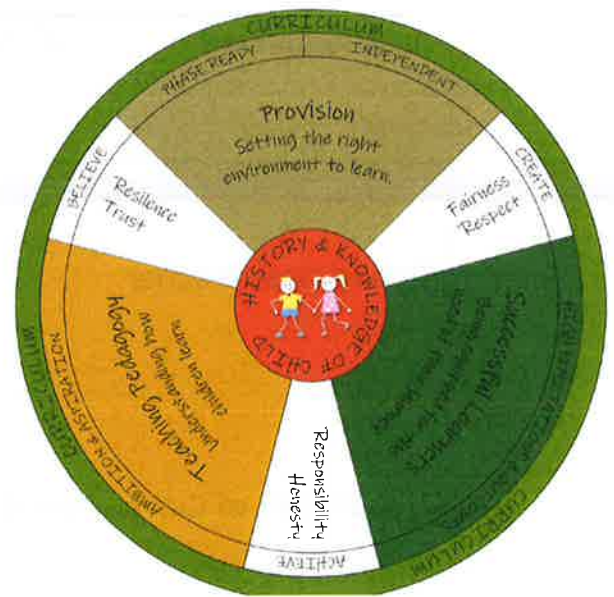
Created By: All staff at Rednal Hill Infants

Statement of Intent

At Rednal Hill Infant school, we aim to serve our community and to meet the needs of all our learners by providing the highest quality education within a broad and balanced curriculum. Our aim is to provide children with a wide range of engaging and high quality learning opportunities and we strongly believe that children learn best when they are focused on the things that interest them, have a clear purpose and are fun

Firm Foundations

As an Infant setting we fundamentally believe that children need a secure base for which to build life-long learning. Our 'Curriculum Wheel' [make as a hyperlink?](#) demonstrates our belief that in order to reach success in the curriculum areas, we need to fully understand our children, their starting points and their families. Through high quality and purposeful learning environments based on the principles of Early Excellence and the effective use of an enabling environment, we build our research based teaching pedagogy rubrics. Running through the core, is our responsibility to develop and nurture children's character, so that they are prepared and can make active contributions to their community and society throughout their life.



Ethos and Values

Our school vision of “Be the very best you can be.” Supports staff to maximise learning by ensuring every moment spent is a valuable one. Our school values of **Respect, Honesty, Fairness, Resilience, Trust and Responsibility** provide a vehicle for learning across the curriculum and are embedded in everything we do. Forest School and outdoor learning are a vital part of school life for all of our children and provide additional opportunities for children to become absorbed in their own learning. We aim to build children’s self-confidence and their independence in order that they develop into life-long learners. Please read our Curriculum Statement for details of how we achieve these aims.



Aims of our Curriculum

As a staff we believe that the aims of our curriculum are:

- To equip children with a thirst to learn and find out about new things; to pose questions of the world and have the tool kit to answer them.
- For children to learn with a purpose; to help them make links in their learning and see how it connects to the wider world around them.
- To be responsible;
- For children to feel successful in many aspects of their life, not only the academic. For them to feel the sense of improvement and achievement; knowing that this takes time, effort and perseverance.
- Aspirational
- Grit, self-regulation
- Collaboration
- Nurturing and fun.

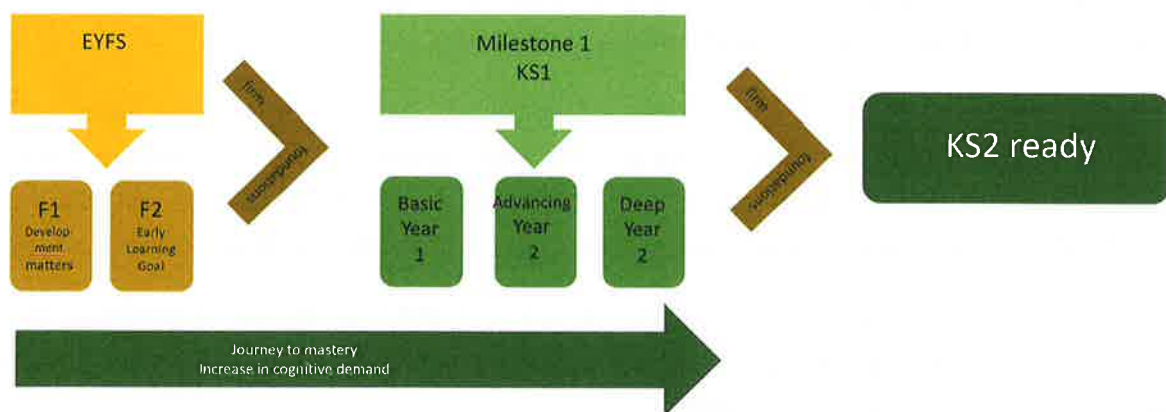
In order to achieve this, we have influenced our curriculum design on research based on the approach promoted by Chris Quigley. Where our basic principles are that learning is a change to long-term memory and our aim is to ensure that our students experience a wide breadth of study as a result of staff expertise.



Curriculum intent model

1. **Curriculum drivers** shape our curriculum breadth. They are derived from exploring the backgrounds of our children as well as our beliefs about high quality education. Experiential learning is an integral part of our provision.
2. **Cultural Capital** gives our children the vital background knowledge required to be informed and thoughtful members of our community who understand and live by British values.
3. **Curriculum Breadth** is shaped by our curriculum drivers, cultural capital and potential subject topics which are shaped to the needs and interests of the cohort.
4. Our curriculum distinguishes between **Enquiry themes** and 'threshold concepts'. Enquiry themes give the specific aspects of subjects that are studied.
5. **Threshold concepts** tie together the enquiry themes into a meaningful scheme. The same concepts are explored in a wide breadth of topics. This allows for children to return to the same concepts over and over to gradually deepen their understanding of them.

6. As an Infant school we work within **Milestone 1**, which includes the procedural and semantic knowledge children need to understand the threshold concept, thus providing a progression model. Our progression maps have been created by staff so that individual years groups know what they are focused on achieving and how this links to subsequent learning.
7. **Cognitive science** tells us that working memory is limited and that cognitive load is too high if children are rushed through content. This limits the acquisition of long term memory. Cognitive science also tells us that in order for students to become creative thinkers, or have a greater depth of understanding they must first master the basics, which takes time and repetition.
8. As part of our progress model we use a different **Pedagogical style** in each of the cognitive domains of basic, advancing and deep. This is based on research focusing on direct instruction in the early stages of learning and discovery based approaches later. Although we use direct instruction for the most part in the basic domain, we also use exploration to motivate children to develop their sense of enquiry.



Implementation

We use a thematic approach to our learning in order to give children purpose and opportunities to see ideas, concepts and skills linked within a web of knowledge.

Maths, English and science are predominately taught in discrete sessions with opportunities then for children to use what they have acquired through the rest of the curriculum. Once children have received direct instruction children then have the opportunity to demonstrate and use what they have learnt in different contexts. Our non-core subjects are delivered through our enquiry approach, and these three main principles underpin its organisation:

1. Learning is most effective with **spaced repetition**.
2. **Interleaving** helps children to discriminate between topics and aids long-term retention.
3. **Retrieval** of previously learned content is frequent and regular, which increases both storage and retrieval strength.

In addition to these three principles we also understand that learning is invisible in the short term and that sustained mastery takes time.

Continuous provision and longitudinal learning, in the form of daily routines, replaces the teaching of some aspects of the curriculum and, in other cases provides retrieval practice for previously learnt content.

Longitudinal learning is used for children to experience concepts in reality, repeatedly and over time. Concepts such as time, weather, seasonal change, chronological events, money and geographical knowledge are referred to either on a daily basis or frequently through the week.

Enquiry Based learning

We believe children who are curious are destined for success.

A curious child is motivated to ask questions, seek answers, and apply those answers to his or her personal experience. We aim to enable every child in our school to demonstrate curiosity, an attitude of wonder, and a desire to discover.

Curiosity and motivation lie at the heart of enquiry-based education. This approach to learning underpins our curriculum and ensures our classrooms are high-energy learning environments, where children are excited to learn and participate. Our curriculum is specifically designed to enable all children to become independent and successful learners.

This approach, along with rich content, allows our children to ask themselves three questions about any new concept being introduced: What do I already **know**? What do I **want to find out**? What have I **learnt**?

During **Enquiry Based Learning** subjects are intertwined in order to provide meaningful opportunities for children to find answers to the questions they have posed. The skills needed in order for children to progress are expertly considered within each subject, across each year group, in order to ensure depth and breadth of learning. Highly skilled staff judge when there is a need for direct teaching of discrete skills and knowledge and this is carefully balanced within each **Enquiry** and the teaching day.

Enabling environments

An enabling environment is a rich and varied space where risks are minimised and well managed, and children are protected from harm.

We:

- Create an environment that is warm, welcoming and nurturing and facilitates a sense of belonging.
- Offer a range of resources, which are familiar to the children as well as activities that are new to them.

- Ensure that the learning and environment offer room for outdoor and indoor play, sufficient space for children to move and collaborate, and encourage exploration and risk-taking.
- Plan for a range of activities which serve different purposes: inspire imagination and role play, exploration of personal relationships and feelings, problem solving, quiet time and reflection.
- Ensure the learning and environment meet the needs of all the children who attend, from very young children to older children.
- Pay close attention to individual children. Considering what children are genuinely interested in and incorporating this into the environment. We are facilitators in supporting how children communicate better. Recognising when they are ready to play and ready for rest. We recognise when children are intrinsically motivated to learn and therefore how they can have choice and control over this. The environment needs to meet their individual needs.
- Staff understand the importance of building warm and supportive relationships and the importance of nurturing a child's development.
- Ensure resources are at child height and accessible and use resources which can be moved and used in a variety of ways.
- Allow children the time and space to focus.
- Involve children in making the schools' ground rules for behaviour, and creating the behavioural codes of practice, involving them as much as possible.
- Engage children in activities to build their emotional resilience and social skills.

Continuous Provision

Continuous provision interlinks all areas of the curriculum providing purposeful opportunities for children to read, communicate through writing, solve mathematical problems and articulate their thoughts, ideas and plans. In our classrooms, you would see well-organised and resourced environments, where children are empowered to be active in collecting the resources they need to complete their task or project. Collaboration with other children in negotiating the use of resources and sharing ideas, especially when working within a team.

An example of this would be in the creative area, where after a 'spark' or 'hook' from an experience children may independently investigate how to build a vehicle by using junk modelling. Arranging the materials in different ways and testing if they can add any other materials to their vehicle to make it sturdier. Continuous provision also enables children to return to their explorations and consolidate their learning over the course of a day or a more extended period. When children do this, they can explore what happens to things as they change over time, and make changes to explore new ideas.

When preparing our resources for continuous provision we consider:

- Each area within the continuous provision had the necessary resources to encourage children to play and explore in a variety of ways.
- Areas offer a range of high-quality resources that will act as a good starting point for the children's explorations.

- Using open-ended questioning to engage the children in conversations and prompt their creative thinking.
- Giving children time to revisit what they did yesterday, last week, or even a few weeks ago.

Impact

Because learning is a change to long term memory it is impossible to see impact in the short term. We do however, use continuous assessment to determine whether the deliberate practice is appropriate, related to our goals and likely to produce results in the longer term.

We use lesson observations, daily walks and professional dialogue with practitioners to see if the pedagogical style matches our depth expectations and to compare students work over time.

Child's voice is a vital part in evaluating the impact of the curriculum. Subject leaders discuss children's leaning through 'children chats' to assess the impact on long term memory. Children enjoy sharing their Enquiry learning through work captured and recorded in their books.