

CURRICULUM DESIGN STATEMENT

“Education should be about broadening minds, enriching communities and advancing civilisation. Ultimately, it is about leaving the world a better place than when we found it.”

– Amanda Spielman, June 2017

1. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Our curriculum is at the heart of education at Trefonen School. Our curriculum at Trefonen is a **knowledge-led progression model**. We teach for long term learning. Through our curriculum we intend to teach the key concepts within each specific subject progressively upon secure previous knowledge within a broadly context based framework (i.e. through a topic, a theme or a key question). This will enable children to re-visit and build upon the key concepts at an increasingly deeper level as they move through the school. In this way children will have the opportunity to make increasingly complex connections in their learning across a range of contexts, resulting in rich and deep learning that is transferable.

Our school ‘Values Curriculum’ is interwoven throughout our knowledge-led learning. This should enable children to think critically about the knowledge they have gained, within and outside of the school, and use it to make emotionally literate and morally responsible decisions and choices.

2. INTENT

(i.e. Our clear shared vision of what we intend our curriculum to achieve)

The core purpose of education at Trefonen School is to provide our children with rich, deep and durable learning that is transferrable across a range of contexts. It is built upon a strong emotionally literate and morally responsible foundation. This will equip them with the knowledge, skills, understanding behaviours and attitudes necessary for success in their next stage of education, their future employment and for their adult life within an ever changing world.

At Trefonen School, our unique curriculum design and curriculum approach is aligned to our specific local context and our pupils’ particular needs.

Our curriculum should enable our children to:

- build strong, knowledge-based semantic memories, store them in their long-term memory and be able to retrieve and use them as a situation arises
- make strong connections within their learning that are durable and transferrable between contexts
- think creatively and critically
- innovate, solve problems and generate solutions
- develop strong analytical skills

- become emotionally literate and morally responsible citizens.

Our curriculum includes a strong focus on **growth mindset**, which is specifically taught as well as threading throughout the curriculum.

Our school values curriculum should help our children to:

- think critically about the knowledge they have gained
- make emotionally literate and morally responsible decisions and choices, that keep themselves and others safe and be able to thrive
- have high aspirations.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

(i.e. How do we carry this out?)

3.1 Bespoke Curriculum

Our curriculum is a bespoke curriculum. We have designed it around the specific needs of our pupils and it is continually responsive. Consequently, our school curriculum is not static, it is continually building and reconstructing in response to our pupils' changing needs. Our school staff are reflective practitioners, they consider what works and what doesn't.

3.2 Knowledge-led approach

- Through our knowledge-led approach, children are taught to master subjects through subject specific knowledge, where skills are an outcome not its purpose (i.e. skills are the outcome of the repeated practical application of knowledge).
- The development of knowledge and consequent skills are delivered contextually where appropriate, such as through a particular topic/theme or key question. This helps children to store and retrieve their knowledge and skills. Staff help pupils to make connections in their learning between different topics/themes/key questions. This strengthens learning and makes it more durable and transferable.
- Staff use intelligent repetition of key concepts to enable deeper understanding and stronger connections to take place. Intelligent repetition is used to promote the acquisition of core knowledge, efficient recall, to practise, to deepen understanding and to make connections.
- Time is built into lessons to re-visit information that has been forgotten. Staff understand that for knowledge to embed in the long term memory, it needs to be learned over many different interactions and that it takes effort. Staff understand that greater effort results in stronger connections.

3.3 Progression and Mastery

- Our curriculum recognises that children need to be taught the key or 'high dividend' concepts within each subject in a way that minimises overload and maximises retention.
- Our curriculum recognises the importance of progression. We understand that this is not a superficial movement from levels or stages. It is an understanding of the concept of **Mastery**. Through the Mastery approach new knowledge is built upon secure previous knowledge. Mastery includes making connections between different aspects of learning or different contexts for in

order to create a *rich web of knowledge*. This results in the construction of strong semantic memory.

- Our curriculum grows progressively more and more complex through sequential and spiral learning, giving our children the capacity to learn more, make connections and deepen their understanding.
- As our school's scheme grows progressively more and more complex and sophisticated over time, and our children move from year to year, our children have the opportunity to think more deeply about important concepts and apply them to within other contexts.

3.4 Local Context, Educational Visit & Visitors

- Our curriculum makes good use of local and other areas, school visits and school visitors to close gaps in our children's experience. It also provides wider opportunities and experiences that will enable our pupils to apply their: knowledge, skills, values and understanding in much wider contexts.
- Our bespoke curriculum recognises that due to the rural nature of our school, some of our pupils may not have direct or regular experience of the wider urban, social, cultural or religious diversity that they may experience within an urban community. We are aware of the social and cultural gaps that our pupils may experience as a result of this. Where our children lack personal experience of urban society and/or of culturally diverse societies, our curriculum design seeks to recognise these experiential gaps and close them through our specific provision. By tailoring knowledge in this way our curriculum is a strong vehicle to address social and cultural disadvantage.
- At our school we teach critical thinking skills in context, we give pupils the information and the opportunities to think critically about the subject matter and use it to solve problems and generate creative solutions.
- We teach children how to keep themselves and others safe, including from the risks associated with extremism, grooming, and bullying, both on and off-line. This includes any recently identified risks, such as those associated with 'County Lines'.

3.6 Assessment

- Assessment is interwoven throughout the curriculum. Summative and formative assessments are used well by staff to check pupils' understanding of key concepts. This supports staff in identifying gaps in knowledge and understanding and enables them to respond appropriately by adjusting their teaching.
- Assessment information is also used by staff to identify gaps in knowledge and skills, identify the depth of understanding and to inform and improve future curriculum design.
- At Trefonen we also recognise the value of assessment as an important learning tool which provides opportunities for children to strengthen their memories through concerted effort.
- We make good use of the value of assessment tasks in strengthening memory by providing children with opportunities to 'struggle' and make sustained effort in trying to retrieve information, the process of which strengthens their memory. We understand that it is through the concerted effort within such tasks that strengthen memory recall and creates the strongest connections in their learning.
- 'Spaced learning' and 'Interleaving' are used well to provide children with opportunities to practise retrieval over time.

3.7 Leadership and management of the Curriculum

- At Trefonen our strong subject leaders are passionate about their subjects and share their vision with confidence.
- They monitor the delivery and coverage of their subjects well.
- Subject leaders strive for specialism and are confident in describing the impact of their particular subjects. They know the quality of their own curriculum design and understand that their subject is important.
- Subject leaders understand that in depth understanding of fewer, but high dividend concepts is more important than surface level understanding of more content.

4. IMPACT

(i.e How do we know that it is working?)

As a result of our curriculum, most children who leave our school:

- have a strong web of knowledge across the curriculum subjects that is deep, durable and transferable from one context to another
- can retrieve knowledge and make connections between contexts
- can apply their skills across a range of subjects
- can think deeply about important concepts
- can apply their knowledge and use it to solve problems and generate creative solutions
- are creative, innovative and can think critically
- are sympathetically aware of other people's feelings; they are tolerant and forgiving
- are able to make deeper connections in their learning as a result of their access to experiences through our school that they would not otherwise have had
- are able to think critically about the knowledge they have gained and make emotionally literate and morally responsible decisions / choices
- have the knowledge and resilience that they need to resist extremism and other potential risks in order to keep themselves and others safe.

5. APPENDICES

5.1 APPENDIX A: Research, Tools and other Useful Resources:

5.1.1 Curriculum research: *assessing intent, implementation and impact* – DfE / Ofsted:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/curriculum-research-assessing-intent-implementation-and-impact>

5.1.2 Curriculum research: *Memory not Memories* – Claire Sealy:

<https://primarytimery.com/.../memory-not-memories-teaching-for-long-term-learning/>

5.1.3 Speech from Ofsted Leader - Amanda Spielman:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/amanda-spielman-speech-at-the-festival-of-education>

5.1.4 Article: *Can Ofsted Judge Curriculums?*

https://www.teachwire.net/news/can-ofsted-judge-curriculums?utm_source=TP-weekly&utm_medium=20190111&utm_campaign=weekly