# Curriculum Policy

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| Author/Reviewing member of staff | Mr P Barber |
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## Aims

At Westacre Middle School, we aim to foster a life-long love of learning, through adopting a practical and cross-curricular approach. Our Creative Curriculum aims to deliver a world class education that will equip our children with the skills required to be independent and responsible citizens. The curriculum matches our whole school vision, which fosters an atmosphere of inspiration, challenge and achievement.

## "Inspire. Challenge. Achieve"

Our curriculum intends to:

- Provide a broad and balanced education for all pupils that's coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge for skills and future learning and employment
- Ensure pupils experience a wide breadth of study and opportunities and have, by the end of their time at Westacre, long-term memory of an ambitious body of procedural and semantic knowledge.
- Enable pupils to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations
- Support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Support pupils' physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active
- Equip pupils with the awareness and skill set to promote good mental health and live a safe but challenging life
- Promote a positive attitude towards learning
- Ensure equal access to learning for all pupils, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support
- Equip pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life
- Provide a range of memorable learning experiences through our 'Experiences' curriculum.

These aims are achieved through the use of curriculum drivers, key concepts and knowledge categories as detailed in our Curriculum Intent Statement (see Appendix A)

## Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study, which all maintained schools in England must teach.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 and Equality Act 2010, and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's Governance Handbook.

## Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board will have a strategic oversight of the impact of the curriculum and will monitor the impact of the curriculum on pupil outcomes.

The governing board will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- Enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The governing board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The governing board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

Subject Leader

The role and responsibility of the subject leader is to:

*Know, Support, Evaluate, Change and Develop*

- Each subject leader will draw up their own Curriculum Development Plan identifying priorities within their subject or area that should be changed or developed to improve the curricular experience for all our children.
- Subject leaders will write a bespoke Subject Intent Statement, which specifies the rationale behind teaching the subject and how we promote the three curriculum drivers within the subject specifically. They will also share with staff how we plan to meet the needs of children with SEND and more able children as part of our Inclusion strategy, and how we support personal development through the curriculum as part of our SMSC provision.

- Subject leaders will attend training courses and offer CPD training to Westacre staff on a regular basis in order to maintain the profile of our curriculum and offer the best possible provision to our pupils.
- Subject leaders will maintain a Subject Leader folder, where they will store whole school and subject-specific documents supporting their understanding of their subject in school. This will include records of on-going termly subject evaluations, which are also shared with the relevant teaching staff and SLT members. More information about how these are carried out can be found with the school Evaluation Policy.
- Subject leaders will plan specific 'key concepts' that will be the focus of learning in the subject across school. Key concepts tie together the subject topics into meaningful schema and are explored in a wide breadth of topics across all year groups. Through this 'forwards-and-backwards engineering' of the curriculum, students return to the same concepts over and over and gradually build understanding of them.
- Subject leaders, in conjunction with relevant teachers across school, will ensure that curriculum planning meets the needs of both the National Curriculum and our own bespoke curriculum drivers (Aspirations, Communication and Diversity).
- Subject leaders will make clear to all teacher what the intended 'end points' for our children when they leave Westacre are. These subject –specific aims are known as 'subject traits'.
- Subject leaders will report to the Headteacher and/or Deputy Head with responsibility for the curriculum in bi-annual Subject Review Meetings about the strengths and areas for development of their subject.
- Subject leaders will offer support and guidance when necessary to colleagues to ensure delivery of the subject consistently meets the needs of this policy.

## Creative Curriculum Organisation and Planning

Our Creative Curriculum is based around key themes and texts that are reviewed regularly. Year leaders, working with their teams and subject leaders, are responsible for planning the Creative Curriculum themes. Where appropriate, links are made across all subjects studied. However, the main links of our Creative Curriculum are made across Art, DT, Geography and History. Within Key Stage 2, these subjects are delivered through weekly CC (Creative Curriculum) lessons with an even focus on the four subject disciplines across the school year. As preparation for the children moving to high school and in recognition of the different curriculum needs of Key Stage 3, our Year 7 children are taught Geography and History within weekly Humanities lessons (ensuring an even delivery of the two subjects across the school year), with separate Art and/or DT lessons delivered on a weekly basis. All other foundation subjects within the National Curriculum are delivered on a weekly basis across school, with the content of these lessons linking to the year group's key themes where appropriate.

### 1. Long Term Planning

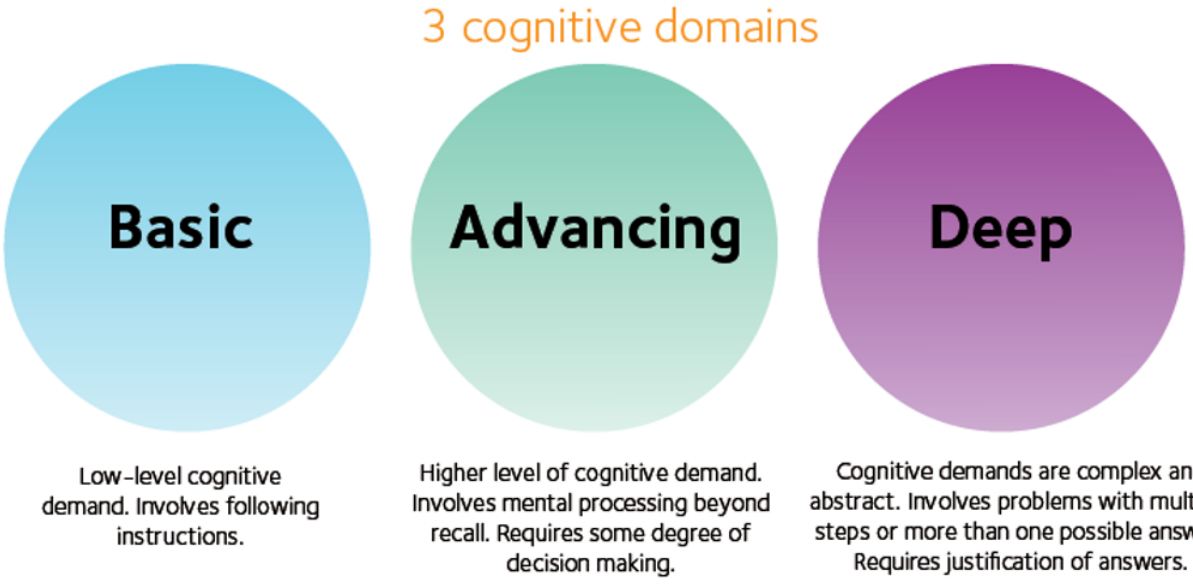
An overview of the year should be completed before the start of the academic year which includes Creative Curriculum theme titles and the main curriculum content. These are shared with parents in our Curriculum Overview document and year group specific Breadth Maps. Curriculum overviews form the school's long term planning document and must be reviewed annually by year leaders and subject leaders to ensure coverage is adequately meeting statutory guidelines. For each term's CC theme, year leaders and teachers within a year group review the intent of the theme to ensure learning that is planned links to our school vision and curriculum drivers, shows progression from previous and to future year groups' planning, and links to our local context, and relevant Maths / English and SMSC objectives, as well as considering safeguarding opportunities within the curriculum.

### 2. Medium Term Planning

From the overview, year teams and subject leaders should map all possible creative and stimulating learning experiences. From this broad base of ideas, Year Leaders should, in partnership with subject leaders, identify the key

skills to be learnt and highlighted, taken from the National Curriculum. These key skills and objectives will form the basis of termly curriculum jigsaws that will be sent home to keep parents up-to-date with what their child is learning across the curriculum. Knowledge webs are created in collaboration between subject leaders and class teachers to map the relevant semantic knowledge children will be expected to learn each term. These webs are used as a teaching and learning tool, as well as being shared with parents.

Across all subjects, planning will indicate how teachers intend to offer children appropriately pitched learning opportunities at the different layers of cognitive demand that we use across our school curriculum (Basic, Advancing and Deep). As a summary, children will be challenged to work in the following ways at each layer:




Each Year Leader will evaluate the curriculum in their year group on an ongoing basis. Subject leaders will evaluate their specific area of the curriculum throughout the year in the form of lesson visits, book / learning trawls and / or pupil discussions. The monitoring will also be an opportunity to assess whether the curriculum that is expected is being delivered across the whole year group.

## Curriculum Enrichment

1. Experiences Curriculum

To support our main curriculum, we have developed an Experiences Curriculum to provide our children with a range of additional 'real-life' experiences. These experiences support our focus on cultural capital and are planned carefully across all year groups to supplement learning in the classroom (see Appendix B for further information). These opportunities form part of the explicit and 'hidden' school curriculum and are planned for throughout the year whenever possible through lessons and enrichment opportunities.

2. Curriculum Events

To support our main curriculum, we also utilise Curriculum Events to provide memorable and meaningful learning opportunities. These will often involve a change to the normal school timetable and curriculum for a half day or day. To ensure the events supplement the learning that goes on in the curriculum, teachers and / or subject leaders complete a Curriculum Event intent plan, which enables them to plan opportunities during the Event to link learning to the National Curriculum, to SMSC objectives and to our school curriculum drivers, before the event receives SLT approval. As part of our ongoing school evaluation procedures, all Curriculum Events are reviewed against pre-determined learning-specific success criteria to ensure they have the best possible impact on pupil learning in school.

## Assessment

1 Formative

As per our school Teaching and Learning policy, teaching staff will assess children's learning in each and every lesson. This may be done, for example, as part of a Learning Talk, which will help judge whether a pupil has a basic, advancing or deep understanding of a particular objective. Lessons and tasks will be adapted accordingly. Our school Feedback Policy has detailed information about how we use Immediate, Summary and Review feedback to support assessment of pupil learning.

2 Summative

Foundation subjects are assessed each term. Teachers assess children's attainment in targeted 'key concepts' each term to ensure the process is both efficient for teachers and beneficial to pupil progress. Subject leaders evaluate the outcomes from each point of assessment to identify key targeted areas for the following term's curriculum planning and implementation. This ensures our curriculum remains bespoke to the needs of the children in each cohort, with the impact of this evaluated each term. Our approach to assessment across the curriculum is constantly evaluated in order to achieve best possible impact for our pupils.

## Children with Additional Needs

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEN
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report.

## Resources

Once the curriculum overviews are in place, Year leaders should meet with subject leaders and identify any resources in school or required, including visits and visitors. Bids for a Subject Budget will be made to the Deputy Head with

responsibility for school budgets before the start of each financial year. Once a Subject Budget is approved, subject leaders can request the purchase of resources using the Curriculum Budget Request form. These should be given to the same Deputy Head and include the desired impact on learning or other impacts on the children at Westacre Middle School.

## Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the school curriculum.

The Curriculum Deputy Headteacher is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the school curriculum and the role of the Year / Subject Leaders within this process.

The Year Leader is responsible for monitoring and reviewing their Year Group's curriculum, ensuring that all non negotiable elements are met and that the key skills / knowledge are mapped, highlighted and addressed effectively and creatively.

Subject leaders are responsible for evaluating and reviewing the delivery and impact of their subject area within the school curriculum.

More information about these aspects can be found in our school's Evaluation policy.

## Appendix A Curriculum Intent Statement

At Westacre Middle School, we aim to foster a life-long love of learning, through adopting a practical and cross-curricular approach. Our Creative Curriculum aims to deliver a world class education that will equip our children with the skills required to be independent and responsible citizens. The curriculum matches our whole school vision, which fosters an atmosphere of inspiration, challenge and achievement. "Inspire. Challenge. Achieve"

### Basic Principles

1. Learning over time is a change to long-term memory.
2. Our aims are to ensure that our students experience a wide breadth of study and opportunities and have, by the end of their time at Westacre, long-term memory of an ambitious body of procedural and semantic knowledge.

### Curriculum Intent model

1. Our Curriculum drivers (diversity, aspirations and communication) shape our curriculum breadth. They are derived from an exploration of the backgrounds of our students, our beliefs about high quality education and our values. They are used to ensure we give our students appropriate and ambitious curriculum opportunities.
2. Cultural capital gives our students the vital background knowledge required to be informed and thoughtful members of our community who understand and believe in British values. This is achieved through careful text selection, a focus on vocabulary and the offer of a range of purposeful experiences.
3. Curriculum breadth is shaped by our curriculum drivers, cultural capital, subject topics and our ambition for students to study the best of what has been thought and said by many generations of academics and scholars.
4. Our curriculum distinguishes between subject topics and 'key concepts'. Subject topics are the specific aspects of subjects that are studied.
5. Key concepts tie together the subject topics into meaningful schema within our skills progression maps. The same concepts are explored in a wide breadth of topics across all year groups. Through this 'forwards-and-backwards engineering' of the curriculum, students return to the same concepts over and over and gradually build understanding of them.
6. Knowledge categories in each subject give students a way of expressing their understanding of the key concepts and linking their learning across the year groups.
7. Knowledge webs help students to relate each topic to previously studied topics and to form strong, meaningful schema.
8. Cognitive science tell us that working memory is limited and that cognitive load is too high if students 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, before accessing deeper learning.
9. The goal for students is to display sustained mastery at the 'advancing' stage of understanding by the end of each year group and for the most able to have a greater depth of understanding at the 'deep' stage.
10. As part of our progression model we use a different pedagogical style in each of the cognitive domains of basic, advancing and deep. This is based on the research of Sweller, Kirschner and Rosenshine who argue to

direct instruction in the early stages of learning and discovery based approaches later. We use direct instruction in the basic domain and problem based discovery in the deep domain. This is called the reversal effect.

11. Our curriculum design is based on evidence from cognitive science; three main principles underpin it:
    - Learning is most effective with spaced repetition.
    - Interleaving helps pupils to discriminate between topics and aids long-term retention.
    - Retrieval of previously learned content is frequent and regular, which increases both storage and retrieval strength.
12. In addition to the three principles we also understand that learning is invisible in the short-term and that sustained mastery takes time.
13. Our content is subject specific. We make intra-curricular links to strengthen schema.
14. Continuous provision, in the form of daily routines, replaces the teaching of some aspects of the curriculum and, in other cases, provides retrieval practice for previously learned content.

Impact

Because learning is a change to long-term memory it is impossible to see impact in the short term.

We look at the practices taking place to determine whether they are appropriate, related to our goals and likely to produce results in the long-run.

We use comparative judgement in two ways: in the tasks we set and in comparing a student's work over time.

We use school self evaluation processes to see if the pedagogical style matches our depth expectations

We use book scrutinies with pupils present to help us judge the impact on long term memory.

## Appendix B -Westacre Experiences Curriculum

Here are 60 real-life things to do during your time at Westacre outside of the normal learning that goes on in the classroom. During your three years at middle school, we challenge you to have a go at each and every one of these real-life experiences.

| | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 |
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| Autumn 1 | Make a new friend<br>Join a club<br>Learn some Yoga<br>Follow A Recipe | Bake bread and make Tzatziki<br>Learn to play the steel pan drums<br>Become An Archaeologist | Become a Leader<br>Build a computer<br>Visit The National Memorial Arboretum<br>Visit a mosque |
| Autumn 2 | Star Gazing<br>Sing in a choir<br>Become cartographers | Get fit during Poppy Run<br>Visit a Cathedral<br>Go to the theatre<br>Go to a disco | Visit a professional sports event<br>Write to a pen pal |
| Spring 1 | Take part in a house competition<br>Build an Anglo Saxon Settlement<br>Learn a new sport | Visit a recycling centre<br>Make a prototype product<br>Virtual zoo visit | Careers Day<br>Speak to future employers<br>Watch a Shakespeare performance |
| Spring 2 | Analyse evidence like a detective<br>Read a map<br>Learn to Sew<br>Purchase a book in a book shop.<br>Explore body percussion | Perform a dance to an audience<br>Film night | Climb a mountain<br>Marshmallow toasting<br>Engage with local community through art |
| Summer 1 | Walk around Droitwich to investigate land use<br>Create Art like David Hockney<br>Visit the heritage centre | Design using CADCAM<br>Learn to use 6 figure grid references<br>Meet an author | Languages Day<br>Cultural Awareness Day<br>Become an entrepreneur |
| Summer 2 | Perform to a live audience during Eisteddfod festival<br>Visit A Hindu Temple | Residential experiences such as: Bell-boating, Camping,<br>Cooking on a fire, Build a den<br>Visit Dorset House<br>Take part in Sports Day<br>Enjoy a picnic | Watch a band<br>Sketch a landscape<br>Meet new people at high school<br>Go on safari<br>Celebrate time at Westacre |