

St Andrew's CEVC Primary School, Great Yeldham

Our Curriculum for the Whole Child



**Maria Trappitt
reviewed (Sept, 2009)**

**St. Andrew's C of E (VC) Primary School
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Planning a Curriculum for the whole child

“The Staff and Governing body of St Andrew’s CEVC Primary School aim to educate each child to the highest level of attainment, having regard to his or her aptitude and ability, with particular emphasis on motivation through interest and direct experience. We aim for pupils to be confident, creative and productive within a full and broad curriculum. A variety of learning styles will be fostered to develop and sustain a sense of wonder and discovery, a delight in learning and achievement and a curiosity about the world.”

(Part of St Andrew’s CEVC Primary School vision)

School Aims

- Every child should develop fully as a result of careful planning and assessment in all aspects of the curriculum during her/his school life.
- The environment should help each child to be able to develop self-confidence and enjoy self-esteem. As a result self-respect will be developed.
- Each pupil should develop a capacity for enjoyment.
- Each child should develop an enquiring mind and have the ability to question and debate rationally. The child should be encouraged, and not feel afraid, to offer her/his opinion even if it differs from the majority.
- All of the pupils should be helped to use language and numbers effectively.
- An awareness of moral and spiritual values should be developed. A respect for the religious and moral tolerance of other races and religious ways of life should be instilled, in addition to an understanding of the Christian Faith.
- The school should help children to understand the changing world in which we live.
- Every child should develop a positive attitude towards the application of tasks. The completed task should always be of the highest quality.
- Everyone should be encouraged to achieve as much independence as possible to prepare her/him to be an independent and self-motivated adult.
- Each pupil should be able to enter the world after education as an active participant in society and be responsible enough to contribute towards life in that society.
- There should be equal opportunities for every child irrespective of gender, ethnic background, age or ability.

Aims

“Every child is entitled to a curriculum rich and varied, challenging and inspiring, which enables every individual to fulfil her or his potential to the highest possible standard, so that all, for the benefit of all, are able to shape their destinies and create a better world.”

Every learner – Essex County Council 1992

This policy seeks to explain the process of planning and is also intended as support for staff in their planning and delivery of the curriculum.

Rationale

We support the statements above in every way and wish to offer our pupils a broad and balanced curriculum that develops them intellectually, spiritually, socially and emotionally. Our belief in the uniqueness of each child has led us to develop this model for this school's curriculum to avoid the possible trap of making the child fit a curriculum and not the other way round. This commitment comes from deeply held views about children and their learning. It is based on:

- the accumulated knowledge and first hand experience of staff;
- observations, assessment and analysis of data and children's work;
- continuing professional development;
- awareness and reference to research;
- liaison and on-going consultation with advisors and experts in the field of education;
- leadership focused on high quality teaching and child sensitive learning.

We are also aware of a growing interest in the broadening of the curriculum in our schools and consider the dialogue going amongst professionals and those responsible for education policy to be a positive step towards a better balanced approach to teaching and learning. We support the drive towards research guiding the policies of education.

Delivery

St Andrew's has for many years believed in a cross curricular approach to learning and has delivered Early Years education through integrated Themes which reflect the child's first five years of learning in the home and pre-school environment. We have developed these approaches further and have a new Long Term Curriculum Plan (LTCP) which continues this approach throughout the primary years, helping to make learning meaningful and put it into interesting and stimulating contexts. It helps children make the connection between one area of learning and another very effectively and it develops a sense of ownership which is crucial for good learning to take place. More recently we have also recognised the importance of learning in the 'Outdoor Environment' and have developed this area by zoning the playground into the five continents of Asia, Australasia, Europe, Africa and the Americas. Where possible and appropriate we are aiming to use the outdoors as a classroom for learning and teaching. The school also has forest school links with the Early Years pupils visiting 'Spencers Spinney', once a fortnight.

School Organisation

Currently the school is organised into two main working groups – KS1 and KS2. Each Key Stage is further divided to reflect the class organisation which is currently;
KS1 - EY/Rec/Year 1 and Years 1/2.
KS2 - Years 3/4 and Years 5/6.

Key Stage teachers meet where necessary for planning, assessment, monitoring etc. Regular Pupil Progress Meetings (PPM) are held throughout the year.

Long Term Curriculum Plan

We have developed a two year rolling programme for KS1 and KS2. We have done this with some important aims in mind.

It is our firm belief that a curriculum should not be content driven and our school aims define other characteristics of learners. These attitudes, skills and processes eg independence, enquiry, self-confidence, creativity etc are the most important part of a child's learning, regardless of the content being taught. These are skills that will be needed for lifelong learning and they help us to develop the whole child. They are reflected in the "doing" parts of the National Curriculum. Much of our content of our long term plan is taken from the National Curriculum and guided by 'The New Primary Strategy – Excellence and Enjoyment'. We welcome the opportunities to be creative with this content and guidance as we believe it is the nature of the subject being studied – the thinking 'like a historian, scientist, author, artist' etc that is at the centre of learning for children.

The National Primary Strategies are invaluable resources for maintaining and ensuring progression in the core subjects of Literacy and Numeracy. Science and ICT as core subjects are also planned with meticulous attention to coverage using the National Curriculum and schemes of work as well as our own curriculum specifications.

Teaching

(See Teaching and Learning Policy.)

The posts advertised in our school will draw potential candidate's attention to the cross curricular nature of our curriculum and we seek to appoint staff who are sympathetic to the aims of this method of delivering a curriculum.

Staff are expected to have imaginative and exciting ways of engaging their pupils by using a variety of learning styles (visual, kinaesthetic and auditory) and having high expectations for involvement from the children. The school is committed to

incorporating Accelerated Learning principles into our teaching styles - for example, there is an emphasis on thinking skills implicit within all the curriculum, music can be used to aid learning where appropriate etc.

'The school provides a rich learning environment and is taking steps for further improvement as part of its Royal Opera House Creative Partnership'. (OFSTED Inspection May 2009)

Learning Outcomes

We have a strong commitment to enriching learning through demonstrating what has been learned in creative ways. Drama, art and music are valued as much as that which is written down or recorded in a more formal way.

Organisation and Content

The organisation of the LTCP has been decided upon using the following criteria:

- an emphasis on one or two areas to form a framework for the Theme, but not exclusively;
- a range of learning opportunities within a term and a balance over the two years for the children and staff with themes chosen so that each half term (KS1) and term (KS2) has a different main focus and Theme (or umbrella concept);
- links between subjects made sensibly and naturally;
- progression and continuity ensured;
- subject areas allocated appropriate amounts of time - all subjects may not always feature every term with a similar amount of emphasis;
- some required content and skills taught as discrete areas;
- revisiting areas eg science for reinforcement will be essential in order not to disadvantage pupils at the end of KS2 and it is recognised that there is a natural reinforcement present within English and Maths through the daily lessons;
- key questions posed to promote enquiry and thinking skills and to engage a child's natural curiosity;
- first-hand learning opportunities in and beyond the classroom eg use of school grounds, visits out, visitors in;
- learning opportunities for drama, music, art, performance and interaction, with a wide social and cultural base;
- opportunities for developing physical and mental health.

The Planning Process

This way of delivering a curriculum to children, in the past, has been criticised for lacking coherence, continuity and clarity. We are aware of the need for clear learning objectives and rigorous planning and these aspects of our planning have a very high priority.

Continuity and progression throughout the whole school will be addressed by meetings in Key Stages and between Key Stages, particularly at times of transfer.

Medium Term Planning

Detailed plans for the ½ term are put together by each class teacher, using the Long Term Curriculum Plan and the National Curriculum. Literacy and Numeracy are planned using the National Strategies as frameworks with flexibility being exercised to allow for rearrangement of content to make the learning links logical. Reference may be made to QCA schemes of work documents.

Staff share ideas about the proposed content. The LTCP is not prescriptive but presents the main areas for study as themes for inclusion. It will be necessary to consider additional content linked to local or national issues at this point and our knowledge of the children and their previous experiences. It is the responsibility of the staff concerned to decide how to deliver and present the learning for the children. This gives staff ownership of the process and stimulates imaginative and creative ways of achieving the learning objectives. It is considered important that teachers are able to use their skills and enthusiasm in planning and delivering the curriculum. Starting points for the term's work are important as they help set the scene for the learning ahead and they are decided with care. A file is kept, by the head teacher, of all medium term plans for reference and to help reduce the work load on future occasions. It is assumed that although the areas to be studied will be similar, the precise termly outcome will differ from year to year as individual approaches will be taken in the delivery and outcomes for learning.

Pupil Involvement in planning

Staff should share this planning with the children in a way that is relevant to them as this is their learning and not a secret to be withheld until the moment of delivery. We believe that this is a crucial part of the teaching and learning cycle. Having an overview of what you are going to learn is an advantage to any learner whatever their age. Children should be encouraged to have an input into the term's planning and although the teacher will need to be in control of the content, there are plenty of opportunities for pupil input, particularly with regard to questioning and thinking skills. More able children can be encouraged to follow their own specific lines of enquiry and all children can undertake research as part of their home learning. It is in this way that children can have real ownership of the learning process which is vital for good learning to take place.

Parental Involvement

A summary of the term's learning is given to parents in the form of a "Theme web" at the beginning of each term. It is the school's intention to hold more parent information workshops over the next few years as a way of informing them about their child's learning. Parents/grandparents are invited to Class Achievement Assemblies, held termly for each class, as a way of parents and pupils having an overview of the learning throughout the whole school. Our Special Events allow the school to celebrate success and share the bigger picture with parents and friends.

Daily Planning

There is no prescribed format for producing short term plans, although generally teachers do use a common format at St Andrew's School and staff are encouraged to do this in a way that is meaningful to them. The main emphasis of any formal short term planning must be:

- to clarify the learning objectives;
- to show the provision for all groups;
- to show the opportunities given to diagnostic marking against success criteria;
- to show when and how marking and evaluation is feedback to pupils e.g. peer assessment sessions;
- to address differentiation and assessment opportunities;
- to contain evaluation notes where relevant.

A timetable of planned activities for the week may also form part of the teacher's short term plans.

Planning Review Processes

Individual staff review their term's plans and modifications can be made to next term's work if necessary and/or changes to that particular term's plan for the next time it is delivered within the LTCP. Teachers review their own daily planning constantly. This will not necessarily be recorded but is a valuable and essential part of the teaching process.

Review of this Document

The new LTCP will need reviewing at the end of the first two year cycle. We will be asking ourselves these key questions:

- Does the plan provide coverage, balance, progression, continuity and coherence?

- Have the children made appropriate academic progress with this curriculum plan?
- Has it met our aims for the development of the whole child and what evidence do we have for this?
- Can we see effective cross curricular links being made?
- What impact has the 'Outdoor Learning Environment' had of pupil's learning?

The Role of the Governors

This policy has been discussed by the whole Governing Body as it is considered by the school to be one of our most important documents. It links with our Teaching and Learning Policy and of course with all Curriculum policies. The Curriculum Committee will review it in line with the school's organisation for policy reviews.

Future Developments

- Continue to review LTCP to accommodate changes in class organisation and other arrangements.

Reviewed by M Trappitt **September, 2009**

Shared with staff **September, 2009**

Shared with Governors **November 2009**

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