

(Book 2)

Curriculum Policy

Last Review February 2023	Next Review February 2025	Review Frequency Every 2 years	Coordinator Head Teacher	Nominated Trustees EC&T Committee
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Introduction

Children who come to the Mulberry Bush School have almost always had negative prior experiences of education, and often multiple school exclusions. Their attainment level is almost always significantly below that of their peers, and they tend to view learning with fear and shame.

It is our intention that children quickly learn to engage in educational activities with curiosity, while in Cherwell Class. They learn to tolerate being in a classroom alongside other children, and to follow the routines and expectations that will support them in subsequent classes. They also build trusting relationships with adults that enable them to show what they already know, so that we can plan a careful curriculum to help them to make maximum progress.

We firmly believe that every child who attends the school has a right to see themselves as a successful learner, to read and write to a level that enables them to access the curriculum, to develop a good foundation in number, and to be able to appropriately advocate for themselves verbally. We intend that all children leave the school with a clear sense of what is right and wrong, an understanding of safety within the context of relationships, and the confidence to speak up in the face of injustice towards them or those around them. We believe that children should be supported to develop healthy habits. All children that attend the Mulberry Bush School have experienced trauma, and have EHCPs with a primary need of Social, Emotional and Mental Health; we therefore acknowledge that children's personal development is one of our primary tasks.

Our curriculum intent is to:

- Promote a positive attitude to learning, enabling children with poor prior experiences of education to see themselves as learners
- Ensure that children develop a strong foundation in reading, writing, maths, spoken language and PSHE
- Provide deep and broad opportunities for personal development and the acquisition of healthy habits
- Provide well-sequenced learning that supports long-term retention of skills and concepts

- Provide children with broad experiences that will help them to find their particular strengths and interests
- Support children' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of British Values
- Support children' physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active
- Ensure equal access to learning for all children, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support
- Equip children with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Provide clarity about how the curriculum is organised, planned and delivered
- Set out how the impact of the curriculum will be monitored

Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the 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 trustees set out in the Department for Education's Governance Handbook.

Roles and responsibilities

The trustees

The trustees will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The trustees will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- Enough teaching time is provided for children to cover the curriculum and the statutory requirements
- Proper provision is made for children with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)
- The school fulfils its role in processes to disapply children from all or part of the National Curriculum, where appropriate, and in any subsequent appeals

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 children will be met
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the trustees
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The trustees are fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The trustees are advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for children with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

Other staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

Subject leaders will ensure:

- The curriculum for their subject is appropriately sequenced
- Sufficient time is given for the regular teaching of their subject
- Teachers and support staff have good subject knowledge so that they can provide appropriate differentiation in their teaching
- Assessments are completed termly, analysed, and that this impacts subsequent practice and training

Organisation and planning

PSHE & RSE

Intent:

- Develop a clear sense of what is right and wrong.
- Develop an understanding of safety within the context of relationships.
- Develop the confidence to speak up in the face of injustice towards them or those around them.
- Experience taking and sharing responsibility.
- Recognise positive aspects of themselves and others.
- Reflect on their perceptions and experiences.

- Develop the understanding, language, communication skills and strategies required to exercise personal autonomy .
- Take part in group activities and make contributions.
- Develop and maintain positive relationships and interactions with others.
- Recognise and celebrate their achievements and successes.

PSHE is integral to the outstanding therapeutic work of the school, and the curriculum provides a structured approach to ensure that all children receive direct teaching in the full breadth of personal, social and health education, and relationships and health education.

Implementation:

We follow the **PSHE Association SEND Framework**, pitching our teaching at ‘core’ to ‘enhancement’, but referring back to the Framework for children working above or below these levels.

PSHE is taught through regular circle times, which happen at least three times each week in every class, for approximately 20-30 minutes.

Each circle time follows the structure: opening / activity / ending. The three circle times cover:

1. Introduce objectives with stimulus (assessment)
2. Challenge preconceptions, introduce new ideas/skills
3. Consolidate/apply to another situation

The topics taught each week are also shared across the school and celebrated in a range of contexts, eg weekly assembly.

The following grid outlines the long-term plan for the subject:

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
	Self-awareness	Self-care, support and safety	Managing feelings	Changing and growing	Healthy lifestyles	The world I live in
<i>Wk1</i>	Things we are good at	Taking care of ourselves	Identifying and expressing feelings	Baby to adult	Healthy eating	Respecting differences between people
<i>Wk2</i>	Kind & unkind behaviours	Keeping safe				Jobs people do
<i>Wk3</i>	Playing and working together	Trust	Managing strong feelings	Changes at puberty	Taking care of physical health	Rules and laws
<i>Wk4</i>	People who are special to us					Taking care of the environment

Wk5	Getting on with others	Keeping safe online		Dealing with touch	Keeping well	Belonging to a community
Wk6		Public and private		Different types of relationships		Money

There is a shared medium-term plan, where all teaching staff add activity ideas and resources. Teachers are then asked to plan weekly for their specific class, planning in detail the assessment activity, and mapping out possible follow-up activities which can be adapted depending on the outcome of the assessment activity.

The school has an extensive collection of books and resources to support the teaching of PSHE, and these are rotated in the library area to support conversations about the topics being taught.

The programme covers in full the statutory requirements of Relationships and Health Education. For full details, please refer to the *Relationships, Sex & Health Education Policy*.

Reading

Intent:

For children to:

- Read a range of text types with fluency.
- Read with a level of comprehension appropriate to their age and cognitive ability.
- Access the curriculum through reading.
- Read for pleasure.

Implementation:

There are five core components of reading:

- Phonological awareness
- Phonics
- Vocabulary
- Fluency
- Comprehension

These are explicitly taught as well as children having multiple opportunities to read, listen to and engage in stories and other reading materials to master all five of the components of reading.

While the vast majority of children joining the school have already mastered the early skills of *phonological awareness*, they often lack confidence and experience in phonemic manipulation, and have limited attention and listening skills. These are supported through word games, songs, rhymes. Music is taught discretely on a weekly basis, integrating words, rhythm and melody. There are many opportunities to play with rhyme and rhythm through regular singing opportunities.

Phonics is taught using the **Sounds-Write** programme. This programme has been carefully selected to match the specific needs of children who come to The Mulberry Bush School. Most children who join the school have a good knowledge of the initial code (one letter, one sound) but limited knowledge of the extended code (2, 3 or 4 letters, one sound, and multiple spellings of each sound). They often struggle with phonemic manipulation and have poor working memory. The programme offers the opportunity for children to practise these phonic skills and to develop confidence and fluency, before they are expected to learn any more alphabetic code. This enables children to engage in reading with adults without them feeling exposed, and therefore supports their early attempts to engage in learning. The programme is also carefully built to avoid cognitive overload, with no extraneous information, action, pictures, etc, that are both confusing and irrelevant in children's learning.

Children are initially assessed using the Sounds-Write diagnostic assessment. This enables staff to pitch their initial teaching. Further assessments are made through observation and children can be moved forward or backward in the programme if necessary. Alternatively, teachers may feel that the level is right for the child but adapt their teaching to include more rehearsal of previously learned skills, or may add in content that is already known but not yet included in the Sounds-Write unit that the child is working on.

Planning is largely provided by the Sounds-Write programme. Teachers are expected to use this to produce weekly plan for individual children. These do not need to be detailed beyond the essential needs of the teacher, eg the 'lesson' (or activity) to be taught and the key words that will be used in the lesson.

All teaching staff have completed the Sounds-Write 4-day course. All staff joining the classroom teams (ie teachers and teaching assistants) are expected to engage in this assessed programme through the online course available throughout the year.

Reading books are organised to correspond with the Sounds-Write units, so that children's reading practice can be closely aligned with their learning in phonics. Children's reading books are pitched below their instructional level so that they can achieve well and build their fluency. Children read to a class adult every day, using their carefully selected readers.

The teaching of *vocabulary* is carefully planned using the Word Aware approach. All teaching staff have been trained to use this approach to identify key vocabulary and to teach this using multi-sensory techniques. Word Aware books and resources are available in the resource library. Sounds-Write also develops children's vocabulary, as it covers a wide range of words and staff are taught how to discuss these words with the children.

Children's *fluency* is supported through multiple opportunities to hear good models of reading, including adults reading to children, peers reading aloud to the group, online books and audio books. Books are selected to maximise children's enjoyment, based on their interests and the quality of language, rhythm and rhyme offered in the texts. Children's reading books are pitched below their instructional level so that they can read the texts fluently with a little practice.

All reading activities support children's *comprehension*, through adults discussing books with children and offering opportunities to predict, describe, respond, compare and reflect on what they have read. Stories are built in to many other teaching areas, including daily circle times and Talk for Writing, and topics being taught in PSHE and Personal Development sessions are reflected through the books presented in the library.

Children are encouraged to *read for pleasure* through well-resourced, attractive book corners, adults talking about books and modelling a love of reading, and protected time weekly for children to Drop Everything and Read.

Writing

Intent:

For children to:

- Confidently record their ideas in writing.
- Use writing to communicate with others in a range of formats.
- Use writing as a means of expression.

Implementation:

Writing is taught using Pie Corbett's **Talk for Writing**. This approach has been selected because it supports oracy and provides a highly structured approach that ensures that children succeed at each step. By moving from imitation through innovation and into independent application, children experience the process of learning a story or text, innovating it through small or large changes, and then apply their learning to new applications. By learning model texts by heart (supported by actions and visuals), children learn to internalise narrative patterns developing their understanding of grammar and sentence structure, fluency, vocabulary, sequence. Through small adaptations to the text, children learn to take risks and experiment within 'safe' confines. As their confidence and skills increase, they are able to make more extensive innovations and explore the effect of these on the reader. Throughout the process, the teacher models and articulates their own thinking, building children's confidence to do this themselves. It is hoped that the integrated approach of Talk for Writing ensures that children become better speakers, listeners, readers, writers and thinkers.

Long-term plans ensure that children cover a range of text types during their time at the school, regardless of when they might join the setting. Each term covers a different topic, with a primary focus on a narrative text type, and a secondary focus on a non-fiction text type related to the topic.

NB As the programme is being introduced to the school (September 2022 onwards), there is a strong focus on narrative, ensuring that staff have a wide range of support from each other to develop their skills and expertise in using the programme. Narrative also provides the richest source of imagination, with an infinite scope for children's innovation and exploration.

Y1 Autumn	Y1 Spring	Y1 Summer
Little Red Riding Hood	Mrs Noah's Pockets	Lost and Found

Narrative text type: Journey Story	Non- Fiction: Instruction text	Narrative text type: Fantasy	Non- Fiction: Persuasive leaflet/letter/advert	Narrative text type: Losing	Non- Fiction: Informative text Wanted /missing posters
Y2 Autumn		Y2 Spring		Y2 Summer	
On Sudden Hill		Cops and Robbers		Peter and the Wolf	
Narrative text type: Change	Non- Fiction: Explanation text	Narrative text type: Beating the monster	Non- Fiction: Discussion / report	Narrative text type: Warning	Non- Fiction: Recount / news report
Y3 Autumn		Y3 Spring		Y3 Summer	
				Lost and Found	
Narrative text type: Portal	Non- Fiction:	Narrative text type: Warning	Non- Fiction:	Narrative text type: Suspense	Non- Fiction:

Medium-term planning allows teachers to consider connections between the required text types and the topics they will be covering in class (these are child-led). A ‘hook’ activity is planned for the whole school each term, providing an exciting experience to launch the new text topic. Medium-term planning should indicate the broad themes and skills to be covered in the unit.

Each term begins with all children being asked to write a ‘cold task’ using the narrative text type with little or no instruction. This provides teachers with a baseline assessment of children’s current abilities and the areas where short-term planning will need to focus in order to plan for children’s small steps of progress. Teachers set individual targets and plan sequential lessons to ensure that these are achieved.

Handwriting is practised daily, through the Sounds-Write programme but also through explicit handwriting lessons.

Maths

Intent:

For children to:

- Develop confidence and competence with number and the number system.
- To calculate accurately and efficiently, both mentally and in writing.
- To judge whether their answers and methods are reasonable and have strategies for checking them where necessary.
- To develop measuring skills in a range of contexts.
- To develop spatial awareness and understanding of the properties of shapes.

Implementation:

Maths is taught using White Rose Maths, supported by workbooks from Power Maths. This programme has been selected because it is a highly sequential curriculum with opportunities for mastery built in at each step. It is accessible to non-specialist teachers and support staff. It provides a highly visual approach for children, and ensures application of new skills in a range of contexts.

Children are assessed in Cherwell class, during their first term at the school. These assessments help us to plan appropriate starting points for children, and to identify gaps in their knowledge. Children's developing knowledge is then frequently assessed to ensure that maximum progress is achieved.

There is a strong focus on number in the Maths curriculum, as this underpins so much of future maths learning, and concepts must be repeatedly rehearsed and revisited in order to be mastered.

Physical Education & Outdoor Learning

Intent:

For children to:

- Develop physical confidence and fitness that enables them to safely control their own body.
- Acquire healthy habits for life.
- Find and practice ways to regulate their bodies at times of heightened stress.
- Experience risk-taking in a safe environment.

Implementation:

PE is taught once each week, in class groups, by a specialist external provider. Each session includes the explicit teaching of skills, along with opportunities to apply these in the context of team games. Children also have the opportunity to learn to swim during their time at the school.

All children are encouraged to take part in the Daily Mile (currently 15 mins, 3 times per week). Sensory circuits are available at all times in the school hall, and children access this at times planned to support their physical regulation needs.

All children take part in Outdoor Learning once each week. Children are taught in class groups. As children progress, there are increasingly high expectations of their ability to keep themselves and others safe during outdoor learning experiences. Progress in outdoor learning is used to group children for our bi-annual field trips (Camping Week and Outward Bound).

Religious Education

Intent:

For children to:

- Learn about religions and beliefs that have influenced the lives of millions of people and heavily influenced the development of different human cultures.
- Learn more about themselves and their place in the world from their exploration of religions and beliefs.
- Learn to understand and then accept human difference as a way to thrive in our multicultural society.

- Learn that there is not always and yes or no answer and how to negotiate the 'grey' area that this represents.
- Learn to understand, and challenge, prejudicial and discriminatory language and behaviours.
- To learn empathy, understanding and an acceptance of difference.

Implementation:

Religious Education is taught through the curriculum strand of *Beliefs, diversity and culture*. All classes have a weekly session that is delivered in a bespoke style incorporating elements of philosophy for children and the group work model. The starting point for these sessions is an understanding that traumatised children have an internalised sense of self that is often negative. This leads them to believe that if they are not right they **must** be wrong and from this point we often see the children acting out in harmful and hurtful ways. So our starting point becomes understanding and then accepting that difference as not just okay, but often desirable. This is planned across a three-year cycle to ensure that all children who attend the school are repeatedly exposed to a wide range of religions, cultures and beliefs. These include, but are not limited to, *Hanukkah, Diwali, Christmas, Holi, Chinese New Year, Eid, Easter, Secular Humanism*. The school also firmly believes in equality and diversity and celebrates important months, weeks and days. These include, and again are not limited to, *Black History Month, LGBT+ Month, Veganuary, Anti-bullying week, Neurodiversity week, Autism awareness week, Children's mental health week, International refugee week, World Kindness day, Random acts of kindness day, International Women's day*. We believe that by revisiting these religions, cultures and beliefs it gives the children the opportunity to not only deepen their understanding but also the best possible chance of this knowledge, understanding and empathy being embedded in their long term memory.

Inclusion

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

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

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

Impact

Trustees monitor coverage of the curriculum and compliance with other statutory requirements through:

- School visits
- Meetings with the head teacher, subject leaders and teachers
- Meetings with the school council
- Scrutiny of progress data

Subject leaders monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school through half-termly monitoring weeks including:

- Planning scrutinies
- Learning walks
- Book scrutinies
- Lesson observations
- Pupil interviews

Subject leaders also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

This policy will be reviewed every year by the headteacher and EC&T Committee.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Teaching & Learning Policy
- Assessment, Recording & Reporting Policy
- SEN Information Report
- Disability Equality Scheme & Disability Access Plan
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Relationships, Sex & Health Education Policy

