

Curriculum Policy - using Ofsted recent research findings in academy subject/curriculum reviews

Our current curriculum policy is updated regularly. The academy is in the process of reviewing the wider curriculum. Our aim is to review the curriculum in each subject by September 2020.

Ofsted has recently conducted a substantial piece of curriculum research. Findings were published in December 2018: '**How to assess the quality of education through curriculum intent, implementation and impact**'. The report identified that where curriculum intent and implementation are strong, the following statements apply:

Strong intent, strong implementation of curriculum

- **High levels of accountability (knowing what is implemented and learned)**
- **Clear methods to check what pupils know, can do and understand so that the right work is taught/informs teaching (assessment)**
- **Teacher subject knowledge is consistently strong across the school, phase, key stage, and department**
- **Senior leaders make it their business to check implementation of the curriculum – it is not left to chance**
- **Leaders ensure that all groups of pupils can access the curriculum well**
- **In primary schools, leaders understand all the component strands of the national curriculum – e.g. they check that the component parts of the technology curriculum happen – planning, designing, making and evaluating**

The same research report also identifies potential 'indicators' of a strong curriculum. Inspectors involved in the research identified some indicators as being most important and these were picked out in the report's findings – these are highlighted in red. We will use these indicators to help us assess success in our curriculum development and review:

- **Rationale and aims of the curriculum design are shared across the school and fully understood by all**
- **Curriculum leaders show understanding of important concepts related to curriculum design, such as knowledge progression and sequencing of concepts**
- **Curriculum coverage allows all pupils to access the content and make progress through the curriculum**
- **The curriculum is at least as ambitious as the standards set by the national curriculum/external qualifications**
- **Curriculum principles include the requirements of centrally prescribed aims**
- **Reading is prioritised to allow pupils to access the full curriculum offer**

- **Mathematical fluency and confidence in numeracy are regarded as preconditions of success across the national curriculum**
- **Subject leaders at all levels have clear roles and responsibilities to carry out their role in curriculum design and delivery**
- **Subject leaders have the knowledge, expertise and practical skill to design and implement a curriculum**
- **Leaders at all levels, including governors, regularly review and quality assure the subject to ensure that it is implemented sufficiently well**
- **Leaders ensure that ongoing professional development/training is available for staff to ensure that curriculum requirements can be met**

Southmere Academy Curriculum Policy

The Aims of Southmere Academy's Curriculum

- We deliver a relevant, tailored curriculum that prioritises key skills in Oracy, Reading, Writing and Maths so meeting the needs of our pupils.
- We forensically track pupil progress to identify strengths and gaps in learning at an individual, group, cohort and whole school level. This information is used effectively to inform the curriculum.
- We aim to raise standards in the teaching of Reading fluency and Comprehension across school as a curriculum priority as identified in performance data.
- Additional monitoring such as observations and question level analysis has also identified the need to ensure mental arithmetic and mathematical reasoning is consistently and effectively taught throughout school to secure mastery in this subject.
- We have a strong focus on Oracy which is taught both discretely and within all subject areas due to the high percentage of New to English pupils and children with English as an Additional Language in our Academy.
- We are aspirational for all our pupils by creating opportunities and preparing every child for the next stage in their educational journey. We share the belief that every child has the right to access and succeed in further College/University Education, regardless of their social circumstances.
- We direct Pupil Premium resources effectively to diminish the differences between our disadvantaged pupils compared to other pupils locally and nationally, so closing the educational gap between poverty and privilege.
- We challenge all pupils to ensure they can reach their full potentials, particularly our most academically able pupils who have the ability to work at Greater Depth across the curriculum.
- We aim to increase our pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world through the teaching of Foundation Subjects. This provides our pupils with a balanced, wider curriculum and supports further mastery in reading comprehension, writing skills and mathematical reasoning.
- We provide a fair and nurturing environment for all pupils, underpinned by equal opportunities, ensuring their most essential needs are met to enable them to thrive personally, socially and emotionally; leaving the path clear for academic success.
- With appropriate guidance, we teach pupils to take responsibility for their own learning behaviours so developing independent, resilient and confident pupils.
- We are positive role models to pupils at all times, teaching core human values such as kindness, empathy and respect for themselves, other people and the natural world through embedding SMSC education into the life of the academy.

- We teach children about a democratic society, British Values and the importance of developing as productive, creative citizens who contribute positively to their community and the wider world.

The Content of our Curriculum

Oracy – Our Rationale for Rigorous Oracy Instruction

- Nearly 100% of our pupils have English as an Additional Language. Many speak none or very little English at home on a regular basis.
- Some of our pupils are completely New to English, having been in the country and the English Education system for less than 2 years.
- The Parents of our new to English pupils also speak no English or very little so they do not have good role models of Language outside of school.
- Most of our New to English pupils have arrived new to England with no previous education in their own countries, many arriving in Key Stage 2.
- Many of our NTE Roma pupils are **not** entitled to the Pupil Premium grant despite being amongst the poorest and most deprived pupils within our school. Having missed several years of their education these language deprived pupils have very little time to learn basic English, let alone master the language to an appropriate age related level so they can meet national standards.

Research has shown that it takes approximately 2 years to develop a basic social language and a further 5 years to develop an academic language. This severe language deprivation impacts negatively on every aspect of learning which means many of our poorest pupils have an enormous amount of catching up to do in order to get to a stage where they can access the primary curriculum. As a good level of spoken English is crucial to good achievement, we have to compensate for the disadvantages many of our pupils face by removing this language barrier as quickly as possible. Without this rapid acquisition the educational gap between our poorest and most vulnerable children will widen compared to privileged children.

Oracy is integral to the effective teaching and learning of every subject. At Southmere it has been taken one step further and it is also taught explicitly as a discrete subject so children will learn how to become confident public speakers in future education and work place contexts. This high standard of public speaking is vital for our pupils if they are going to stand any chance of gaining a higher education and/or a good career. We have high aspirations that all our pupils, including those that have none or very little English, can make excellent progress in Oracy; and with enough time with us will meet the expected standards at the end of Key Stage 2. The academy is part of Delta wide Voice 21 Oracy Project which has further strengthened the school's commitment to raising standards in Oracy and in turn across

the curriculum, particularly in reading and writing. Teachers are beginning to use a dialogic teaching approach to plan lessons that are rich in pupil talk, by considering higher order questions, preparing scaffolds for, and modelling skilful talk. Some of the initiatives include:

- Language of Discussion which includes debate competitions across school, with local schools and with schools within the trust. Current and moral issues that are high priority for our students are discussed in depth, promoting skilful talk and deepening thinking.
- The explicit teaching of talk which enables pupils to speak with confidence in more formal contexts. This is taught through an Oracy Framework which helps learners understand the physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social and emotional skills needed to communicate effectively.
- Pupil Voice meetings provide an opportunity for children's ideas and opinions to be heard and acted upon.
- High level peer evaluation and feedback is promoted in every classroom. The school uses Doug Lemov's 'Teach like a Champion' techniques which includes the use of practical teaching methods that ensure teachers model excellent speech and challenge pupils to think deeper and answer in full and accurate sentences.

Phonics

At Southmere we aim for children to master basic phonics skills as quickly as possible so they are able to decode texts fluently, leaving them free to develop the more complex process of reading with deeper understanding. The school has had great success in the teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1 meeting national standards for our stable Non Roma pupils. Roma pupils have also made excellent progress compared to national outcomes. This is due to effective Quality First teaching and targeted interventions and booster sessions that were delivered to pupils who needed additional support to meet the national expectation. Phonics is taught progressively from Nursery through to the end of Key Stage Two on a daily basis using the Letters and Sounds progression. This is a six phase teaching programme that develops children's phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out a detailed and systematic programme for teaching phonic skills for children starting within the Early Years Foundation Stage, with the aim of them becoming fluent readers and having a sound understanding of common high frequency spellings by the end of Key Stage One. Phonics lessons also focus on the reading and spelling of trickier words that are unable to be decoded phonetically but are essential for children to read and write independently. Due to our high number of New to English and English as an Additional Language pupils, phonics is taught consistently throughout Key Stage Two. Phonics interventions are taught in addition to quality first teaching to all pupils who need it. Parents can click on the link below to find out more about the Letters and Sounds Programme. The website also includes some fun activities to do at home.

To support this progression, the Academy uses a range of other resources which supports kinaesthetic learning. One of the resources the Academy uses is Letterland which promotes the learning of reading, writing and spelling. *“Simple stories about the Letterland characters, explain the full range of dry phonics facts so that children are motivated to listen, to think and to learn. These stories explain letter sounds & shapes, allowing children to progress quickly to word building, reading and writing.”* Please click on the link below to find out more about Letterland resources. <http://www.letterland.com/>

Reading

Our pupils make excellent progress in phonics but the process of teaching reading fluency and comprehension is far more complex and challenging for children with little or no English. We also recognise that our stable pupils with English as an Additional Language have a greater challenge than pupils nationally who speak English from birth as their home language. For this reason teaching reading fluency and comprehension is a major whole school focus.

Through question level analysis of national tests and similar assessments we have identified the main challenges for our pupils in reading comprehension as:-

- Understanding unfamiliar/unknown vocabulary in context.
- Authorial intent - understanding the author's use of technical elements including use of figurative language.
- Resilience – being able to read quickly and still comprehend unknown texts in a test situation within a fixed time limit.
- Being able to answer a question by summarising and distilling into an accurate and precise written answer, even when children can answer verbally when not in a test situation.

Reading is a priority focus across school. This area is being addressed rapidly through an intense INSET programme for all teaching staff to increase their subject knowledge and expertise. Curriculum resources are also being prioritised and directed towards the most vulnerable groups including our disadvantaged pupils. The school is tackling this underachievement in reading with rigorous phonics and decoding instruction and also by using the 'Reading Reconsidered' mastery techniques. This reading comprehension approach involves the deep study of carefully selected texts where children not only learn to establish precise meaning but to analyse the authors' intent.

Reading is a highly resourced area of learning where children read for both pleasure and purpose. Throughout their education, children will be exposed to a wide range of quality fiction and non-fiction texts chosen from a Year group reading canon, and the texts will be read and taught as a whole class. This list of books includes many texts that have been selected to provide a higher level of educational challenge.

All pupils are taught to read daily which includes explicit phonics to master decoding and close reading comprehension lessons where teachers prepare text dependent questions that are specific to the text they are studying. They also have many other opportunities to practise and improve their reading skills throughout the week as a whole class, in groups and individually.

Every child has access to a wide selection of books in classrooms. All children take quality texts home to read every day and they also have opportunities to read to themselves throughout the school day.

Writing

The Academy's strong focus on oracy and reading greatly supports children's writing as they have a great stimulus and purpose for writing, and can also rehearse what they want to write with greater focus and confidence. The Academy has built on the previous year's attainment in Expected and Greater Depth standards for all groups, particularly for Non Roma Pupils in Year 6.

As with Reading, the Academy has developed its own strategy for writing over the last few years by recognising the specific needs of our children to maximise their writing potential. All year groups select appropriate resources and provide exciting opportunities to plan purposeful writing, including the use of school visits to stimulate great work.

In KS1 children write to entertain through story writing, descriptive tasks and poetry. They will also write to inform a reader by writing recounts, letters and instructions. In addition to these strands Year 3 and 4 write to entertain and inform, building their range of text types to include explanations, biographies and newspaper reports. They will also be introduced to writing to persuade by writing adverts, letters and posters. Year 5 and 6 will experience all these stands and will also write to discuss.

Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling

We know how important these technical skills are in developing expertise in reading and writing and so they are taught daily both as discrete skills and within reading, writing and phonics lessons. The Academy achieved very good results in GPS for our stable and Non Roma pupils. There has been a significant increase for all groups in attainment at greater depth.

No Nonsense Grammar is used from year 1 to year 6 to help teachers plan their lessons, along with Alan Peat and Pie Corbett teaching resources.

All year groups use an instructional stepped approach - 'It's Only Words' – to learning tier 2 words appropriate to the year group and children are encouraged to use this language as a matter of course in their everyday speech.

Spelling is taught using specific resources:

- 2014 NC and The National Strategies Primary Support for Spelling.
- No Nonsense Spelling
- Spelling KS1 and Spelling KS2 booklets, specifically designed to be used in class every day and taken home for spelling practise.

Handwriting

Once children can join fluently and clearly they are free to focus on the content and technical features of their writing to improve the quality of their work. Therefore handwriting is taught and reinforced daily to speed this process up. Children are expected to join their writing by the end of Year 2 unless they have a physical difficulty preventing this or they are new to education and are still developing these skills.

By the end of Year 6 children are expected to have developed fluent, confident and individual style of joined writing so they can at speed focussing on the important features that will secure greater depth. The school has a Handwriting Policy including an agreed style for teaching children to form and join their letters and numbers.

Maths

Basic mental arithmetic skills are taught daily in every year group with the aim being for children to be competent in number calculations, leaving them free to solve reasoning problems quickly and confidently.

Our Maths curriculum and calculation policy have been created with the aim that all pupils will achieve mastery of the subject. In order to achieve this, we have focused on embedding basic number skills such as place value, number bonds and times tables throughout KS1 and LKS2. The Academy Maths Calculation policy provides clear guidance for the progression of calculation throughout school, which in turn, is moderated during half-termly work scrutinies.

Teachers throughout school deliver mastery by allowing them to view concepts in as many different representations as possible, and focusing on reasoning and explanation rather than closed-question answers. To support this, we have invested heavily in resources (place value counters, Numicon, Reasoning Cards etc) and have worked alongside Maths Consultant, Roger Bird, to produce high quality teacher models and images that support the mastery of key number facts and equip children with the skills to reason about problem solve. Large amounts of staff training time have been devoted to sharing good practise in each area of Maths (e.g. Fractions, Measures). During these training sessions, staff meet, plan, and produce lessons, resources and strategies with the aim of helping children to achieve mastery.

By participating in the Yorkshire and Humber Maths Hub we have adopted strategies such as Bar Modelling throughout school to prepare children for the challenges of the New National Curriculum. At the same time, we have adopted Same Day Interventions (SDIs) in order to ensure that no child is left behind. These interventions take place during break times and immediately after lessons. They are delivered to children who have struggled during the lesson, only by a teacher, through an innovative break time model which means that teachers are always supporting learning.

This strategy is supported by RAG rating daily tests, which then inform interventions. These are labelled according to Delta Academy's assessment levels: 1, 2.1, 2.2 and 3. Each level of intervention means that the child increasingly receives more teaching time and aims to close the learning gap.

Science, History, Geography and DT

The teaching of these subjects is strengthened by the rigor of oracy teaching.

These subjects are taught in a way that supports our efforts to get as many children as possible to age related expectations in Reading, Writing and Maths. Teachers make sure that there is a variety of opportunities to learn about Science, Geography, History and DT by incorporating it into English and Maths lessons. Subject specific work will then include researching historical events and using them as a tool for writing. It also comes through in our reading comprehension lessons as we link our reading to our writing to broaden the children's understanding of the topic. Not only does this provide an excellent focus for the subject but also allows them to develop their own knowledge in the foundation subjects.

As well as this, visits and visitors are organised throughout the year to provide much needed experiences for our children. Again these trips are tailored around the topic in class, the knowledge gained can then be easily transferred to the writing that they complete in class. Recent visits and visitors include:-

- Malham (geography)
- Bolling Hall and Bolton Castle (history)
- Vikings, Romans and Greeks (Visiting companies)
- Positive Lifestyles Centre and The Deep (Science)

ICT

ICT is used specifically to support language and mathematical development and we have invested heavily in high quality resources across the Academy.

Examples of how ICT is used effectively include:-

- Online Maths Interventions.
- Children can also access home learning activities such as maths and spelling games

PE, Sports and Health

It is our duty to teach children and their families how to keep themselves fit and healthy throughout their lives with good nutrition and regular exercise. In addition to our ongoing curriculum we hold special events such as 'Low Sugar Day' and Charity Sporting activities.

Sport and healthy lifestyles is also a very important focus because we have a high percentage of children who are over-weight/obese. The surrounding area is also heavily populated with unhealthy take away food shops that sell very cheap food to many of our poorest families.

2017 Public Health England research showed that in FS2 17% of our children are obese or overweight compared to 21% in Bradford and 22% nationally.

We provide targeted intervention for these vulnerable children, e.g. healthy food education in cooking clubs and additional physical activities during break times and after school clubs. Our catering providers often provide sessions across school to educate children and their families about healthy eating. We also involve external services such as the School Nurse, Paediatricians and Nutritionists to support children and their families.

Our children receive a lot of opportunities to take part in a variety of competitive sports in P.E including Badminton, Cricket, Frisbee, Futsal, Handball, Netball and Tennis.

Children in Early Years are provided with a range of physical activities in their ongoing provision that will support and challenge their physical development. Children in KS1 and KS2 participate in two PE sessions taught by teaching staff and a trained Sports Coach. Gymnastics, Sports and Dance skills are taught in these sessions throughout the year. Children in Y4 also receive swimming lessons in the Summer Term. The children also have an opportunity to participate in a wide range of daily after school clubs such as Basketball, Cricket, Football, Frisbee, Tennis and Dance. Our sports coach and staff take children to regular tournaments competing against other schools with great success. Most recently a group of children who are talented in sports were given the chance to go to the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield to compete against other schools in our trust from around Yorkshire.

PSHE & Citizenship

The Academy has embedded a whole school Positive Behaviour Policy which is based on the three main principles of Be Safe, Be Responsible and Be Respectful. This approach has resulted in a calm and nurturing environment where issues are resolved using a fair and consistent approach, such as Restorative Chat. Alongside educating children about other religions and cultures, we teach children the importance of upholding shared human values within a democratic Britain. Teaching staff use their up to date training in order to raise pupil's awareness and deliver appropriate PREVENT education.

Religious Education

As a multi-faith school which includes children and adults from many religious backgrounds, we value and celebrate the differences and diversity of our setting.

We hold regular assemblies in order to teach children about different religions and cultures within our school, community, nationally and internationally.

The Arts

We value the great benefits that teaching 'The Arts' to children provide. Having opportunities to enjoy and excel in a creative intelligence builds self-esteem and increased confidence

Music – The children have many opportunities to participate in music based activities, which include:

- Listening to music concerts from visiting performers, such as Bradford Music Service.

- Children receiving musical tuition from external teachers e.g. ukulele.
- Musical productions e.g. pantomimes, end of year singing and dancing concerts.
- Year group singing sessions.
- Year group visits to musical productions e.g. Bradford Alhambra.

Art – Art activities are incorporated into topic work. We also employ artists to work with groups of pupils on topic based projects. The school celebrates art at every opportunity and the inspiring learning environment is rich in examples of various works of art.

Dance – The children take part in dance activities during PE and after school clubs but are also exposed to dance from different cultures from visiting performers during International Days. Examples include; Irish dancers, Indian dancers, Hungarian dancers, African dancers and Street dance performances.

Performance Language – In order to develop children’s confidence and oracy expertise in public speaking, we hold regular debate competitions with local schools. Children have opportunities to practise their performances in class and then perform in front of a much larger audience.

Modern Foreign Languages

As previously stated, English is a new and complex language for many of our pupils so this has to be the main focus at Southmere.

Different languages within and beyond our vibrant cultural diversity are explored and celebrated in every day classroom practice and during our regular assemblies. There are also more formal opportunities to learn a Modern Foreign Language during Key Stage 2 curriculum time and in after school clubs.

December 2018

Review date: September 2019