

*'Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold' Proverbs 8:10*

### Rationale

As a Trust, we are determined that all of our children will have access to a meaningful, engaging and ambitious curriculum which achieves two key outcomes: 1) enables children to grapple with the 'big ideas' and gain deep conceptual understanding over time (curriculum depth), and 2) equips children with the knowledge and skills to construct conceptual understanding and prepare them for their next phase of education and beyond (curriculum breadth).

'Knowledge forms the "teeth" in the gears of understanding. Without knowledge, understanding cannot gain any traction.'

### Our expectations

All of our academies have a curriculum statement which fully takes into account the individual context and needs of the school community. This will be reviewed regularly as contexts change. Academies have a curriculum policy in place that outlines their specific approach and reflects their unique context. As a Trust, the National Curriculum is the benchmark for the curriculum in all of our academies and is the minimum expectation.

We want to ensure that our curriculum meets, if not goes beyond, our own and other stakeholders' expectations. Ofsted's four key questions provide a useful focus for this:

- 1) What is the scope (breadth) of the curriculum? How well does the school's curriculum meet the coverage requirements of the NC?
- 2) How coherent is the curriculum? Where coherence is the thread that goes right the way through the curriculum, making it greater than the sum of its parts.
- 3) How is the curriculum sequenced, and how effective is the order in which children learn new knowledge and skills? Further, how effectively does the curriculum enable what children are learning now to link back to what they learnt in the past, and feed forward to what they are going to need for future learning?
- 4) How rigorous is the curriculum, and what rigour is there within each subject? How does subject-specific knowledge enable children to think about, for example, how a historian would argue or how a scientist would carry out experiments?

### The Intention of the Curriculum

Each academy has a minimum of three curriculum drivers that reflect the needs of the learners, the setting and the community. These drivers must shape the curriculum, and ultimately make each school's curriculum personal to that setting. One of these will be focused on vocabulary development as it is widely acknowledged that this, and the ability to read fluently, is a key to success; particularly for more vulnerable children. These drivers must be explicit, known by all stakeholders and be evident in curriculum planning. The curriculum must also reflect the core values of each academy.

Our academies map the substantive (the content) and disciplinary knowledge (the how) to be taught in each individual curriculum subject – including the core. Learning is deliberately and logically sequenced and built around enquiry questions and key concepts so that knowledge and skills connect and develop over time enabling children to know more and remember more. Each school's curriculum meets and satisfies the four key Ofsted questions.

### Curriculum Implementation

The intent of the curriculum is reflected through its implementation. Subject leaders have determined a clear, coherent and effective subject progression map which builds from the Early Years right through to the end of Year 6. This takes into account the 'big ideas/threads' as well as key knowledge, vocabulary and skills. Subject specific, whole school progression maps enable teachers to build upon prior learning and signpost to future learning, thus deepening children's ability to connect learning over time and see that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Teaching staff use the underpinning knowledge and skills progression documents to plan sequences of lessons that build on prior learning. Elicitation and diagnostic activities are carried out at the start of each new unit of learning to establish children's prior knowledge and understanding as the starting point. Any identified gaps or misconceptions are addressed before embarking on new learning.

We ensure that our subject-specific curriculum maps and resources provide rigour so that children can, for example, think like a historian or scientist. The use of high-quality resources are a fundamental part of the learning process. As a Trust we will support the use of a range of published curriculum vehicles though none of these should be used as an 'off the shelf' solution. Schools must tailor and adapt appropriately to meet the needs of the children.

In some cases, where a school does not have a suitable curriculum in place or where the school falls into a category of Recovery or Repair in the Trust Improvement Model and does not have the capacity to make improvements quickly, the Trust will determine the curriculum that must be followed.

### Lesson Design

As a Trust we use a mastery approach to lesson design across the curriculum. This ensures a small step approach where children are guided through their learning to support metacognition and self-regulation. The key elements of lesson design are:

1. Activating prior knowledge;
2. Explicit strategy instruction;
3. Modelling of learned strategy;
4. Memorisation of strategy;
5. Guided practice;
6. Independent practice; and
7. Structured reflection.

*(EEF: Metacognition and Self-Regulated Learning)*

### **Assessment**

Assessment is an ongoing process and is borne out of information rich classrooms, where the teacher pays careful attention to pupil talk and recorded evidence. Gaps in vocabulary or knowledge are quickly identified and rectified. Any arising misconceptions are planned for in subsequent learning experiences. Feedback is a key tool, as children are supported in accurate learning and knowing what they know (metacognition). Assessment, ultimately, enables precision in knowing both the security of learning and next steps.

### **Knowledge Organisers**

Many of our academies develop knowledge organisers to support teaching, learning and assessment. The knowledge organiser is the 'beating heart' of each unit that details the core content and clarifies the necessary (though not sufficient) knowledge to develop a sophisticated schema for each unit of work. The knowledge organisers will enable children, over time, to become culturally literate (Hirsch, 1987) and engage in powerful knowledge (Young, 2013). The knowledge organisers act as a planning, teaching and assessment tool providing clarity to leaders, teachers, children and parents about what is expected to be learnt and remembered by the end of the lesson, the unit and in the long term.

### **The Impact of the Curriculum**

An effective curriculum will impact widely on the outcomes achieved by children; this includes building cultural capital through exposure to rich and diverse materials. Children will gain and retain subject-specific knowledge and skills, which over time takes them from novice to expert.

Academies provide opportunities for overlearning, retrieval and assessment to ensure that knowledge and concepts have been understood and retained. The focus on vocabulary and language acquisition ensures that all children, including those from disadvantaged or vulnerable backgrounds, have equal access to learning and build learning security commensurate with their peers. Monitoring of the quality of learning includes a significant focus on measuring the knowledge retained by children. The quality of teaching is commensurate with the depth of retention. Approaches to this include: quizzes; spaced repetition; low stakes testing; multiple choice questions; journaling; project work.

### **Inclusion**

All academies ensure that all children take part in all areas of the curriculum (with the exception of those areas where parents have exercised their right to request withdrawal). In addition, there is an agreed approach for how the academy enables all children to access the learning, regardless of their individual needs or abilities. This may be through the scaffolding of teaching and/or tasks; the curriculum is not scaled back (differentiated) as this creates and adds to the disadvantage gap. All children are expected and enabled to achieve well. Scaffolding also includes pre-teaching, pupil conferencing or intervention groups, where, for example, language, vocabulary and key concepts are introduced and/or consolidated. For children who readily master the age-appropriate learning, they are enabled to utilise their subject-specific knowledge and skills through deeper application.

### **The Role of Subject Leaders**

Curriculum subject leaders are supported in developing their skill set to be able to articulate the intent, implementation and impact for their curriculum area. Key to their role is the necessity to be involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning so that they can check the implementation matches the intent and is having the desired impact on outcomes for children. Curriculum leaders must be given opportunities for professional learning to support them in developing others.

### **Collaboration**

Collaboration is a strength of our Trust. Schools readily share the work they are doing with each other and support one another on the improvement journey. It is an expectation that schools will share their expertise, skills and resources for the benefit of all in the Trust. Where schools are working to develop their curriculum they must reach out to others in the Trust to seek support so that they can benefit from work that has already been completed by others.

### **Changes to the Curriculum**

Schools will keep their curriculum under constant review to ensure that it is fit for purpose, meeting contextual need and ensuring children know, remember and can do more. Before making significant changes to curriculum and before making a change to a new curriculum vehicle, leaders must discuss this with their Regional Director of Education.

## Appendix 1 – Vehicles to support curriculum teaching and learning

The following vehicles should be used if the curriculum and/or standards in any given aspect are not delivering the quality of education expected.

Schools with a high quality curriculum offer and standards that are at least in line with national averages in core subjects may use other vehicles and approaches following discussion with their Regional Director of Education.

<b>Phonics</b>	Read, Write Inc Sounds Write
<b>Reading</b>	Whole Class Guided Reading - VIPERS
<b>Writing</b>	National Curriculum based
<b>Mathematics</b>	White Rose Maths
<b>Science</b>	Plymouth Science
<b>RE</b>	Understanding Christianity Discovery Emmanuel Project
<b>History</b>	Collins Connected
<b>Geography</b>	Collins Connected
<b>Art</b>	Access Art
<b>Design Technology</b>	Projects on a Page
<b>Music</b>	Charanga
<b>Computing</b>	Teach Computing Curriculum
<b>PE</b>	Get Set 4 PE
<b>MFL</b>	Salut!
<b>PSHE</b>	Scarf, Jigsaw