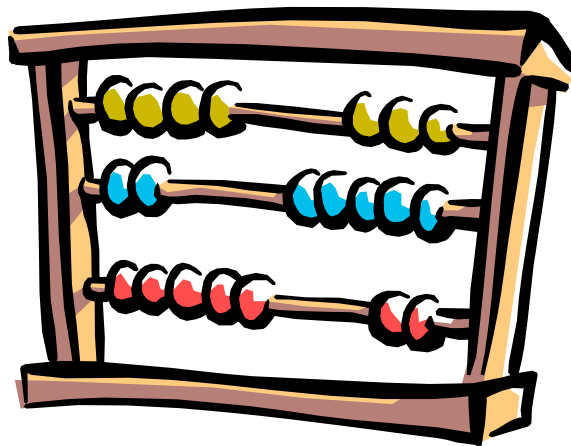




Abacus Primary School

Curriculum Policy



Reviewed: September 2024
Date of next review: September 2025

PURPOSE

This policy outlines our curriculum drivers and intent, as well as the implementation arrangements and impact of these, including (but not limited to): planning, resourcing, assessing and monitoring. This policy was written and reviewed by our curriculum lead, Mrs Ferguson.

OUR PRIORITIES

- To design a curriculum which is at the very least broad and balanced.
- To nurture and support our pupils' wellbeing, in all areas of the school.
- To provide exciting, interesting activities which motivate and engage all pupils.
- To ensure that talk is at the heart of our learning opportunities in all lessons.
- To maximise every opportunity to increase our pupils' vocabulary.
- To encourage children to be self-motivated and independent in their learning.
- To implement curriculum ambassadors and value pupil voice as part of our monitoring.

OUR CURRICULUM RESPONSIBILITIES

Thinking carefully about the expectations around the primary curriculum, we considered the opportunities that we would like to offer our children, as well as what we believe a broad, balanced, exciting and stimulating curriculum should include, to develop our curriculum drivers. We decided that the key drivers for our school are:

Communication - we believe that communication in all forms is a life skill that we want our children to learn and to be able to use confidently. We believe that the very first step of everything we teach starts with the ability to communicate - to speak and to listen - effectively. We know that talk is one of the most important aspects of teaching and learning, which is why an observer should always see active learning and opportunities for discussion and talk in all lessons, including the use of a range of Kagan structures. We understand the importance of verbalising ideas and speaking sentences aloud before putting pen to paper, making use of effective talk partners and pair-sharing as much as possible. Our children love to learn new words and we know that research indicates that the wider a child's vocabulary, the more they achieve in all stages of learning. This is why we ensure that as well as embedding prior knowledge of words and meanings in our lessons, new vocabulary is taught explicitly as often as possible, including Tier 3 vocabulary when exploring subject-specific concepts. Evidence of learning and understanding new vocabulary, including subject-specific vocabulary should be on display around the classroom and in curriculum journals (as well as in exercise books in KS2).

Engagement - we are passionate about increasing our children's engagement in all curriculum areas. We have designed our curriculum around topics that aim to excite and inspire our children, and we offer many exciting learning opportunities in each year group to capture their interest and spark their imaginations. Examples include: topic weeks, theme days, trips, 'hooks' and hands-on experiences. We also offer a range of inspiring extra-curricular activities to build on the children's learning and to further their knowledge and understanding. We are using

Kagan structures in all year groups to engage reluctant learners and to provide active learning opportunities for all. An observer would see children participating in 'active' learning, through Kagan structures and active maths, for example. We also have class 'curriculum journals' that are used to record those "wow!" lessons as well as the opportunities for learning outside the classroom, as discussed above.

Wellbeing - we believe that the wellbeing of our children is paramount. We offer an extensive range of nurturing opportunities and emotional support for our learners, both in the classroom environment and as interventions. Each subject leader is aware of the importance of developing self-esteem, confidence and independence, and as a result, these qualities are truly valued and celebrated throughout the school year. Our staff are supported by our SENCO who provides a wealth of knowledge and experience in these areas. All staff are fully trained in safeguarding procedures and recognise the importance of health, safety and risk assessments in delivering our curriculum. Visitors to our school will see the development of this driver in all classrooms, and the impact of this on our children's everyday lives and happiness.

Independence - we have recognised that our children, whilst eager to learn, sometimes lack confidence in making decisions for themselves without reassurance from adults. We want our children to leave our school with skills for life, specifically the ability to problem-solve and manage their own learning independently. We aim to provide our children with opportunities to develop their independence and resilience, and our subject leaders plan and develop our curriculum activities and schemes of work with these skills in mind. An observer should notice that all children throughout the school in every subject are encouraged to manage their own learning, for example by collecting their own resources, selecting and changing their own reading books, etc.

These drivers will be the vehicles for delivering our curriculum and will be woven throughout our lessons and schemes of work. Our intent is for these drivers to be clear and impactful for all stakeholders; we want our children to be aware of these drivers and to be able to recognise when these are being used throughout the school day.

THE 3 Is

In designing our curriculum, we discussed what we believe to be our '3 Is': our *intent* - the knowledge that we want our children to learn; the *implementation* - how we teach the knowledge; and the *impact* - our evaluation of what we have taught.

A 'good **intent**', according to Ofsted, is not only broad and balanced, but ambitious, coherently planned and sequenced, and inclusive. We believe that our curriculum is based around topics that interest our children and sequenced by subject leaders (to ensure progression across the whole school), with inclusion of our SEND children at the heart of everything we do. Our SEND children are never excluded from curriculum opportunities and we ensure that all activities are inclusive and enjoyable for all children.

In planning our curriculum, we are mindful of the importance of designing learning opportunities that are ambitious - in other words, more than just the National Curriculum expectations. We believe that the extra-curricular opportunities that we offer are designed to build upon the experiences that we offer as part of our class based work. Our curriculum is centred around 'learning to learn' skills that underpin each of our subjects. These can be seen in our subject specific progression maps.

For effective **implementation**, we believe that engagement is the key. We have implemented strategies for engagement, including active maths and Kagan structures, to ensure that all children from the Early Years through to Year 6 are engaged and active learners. With the introduction of PSHE scrapbooks and Curriculum Journals for each class (and floor books in EYFS), discussion and engagement have been brought to the forefront of our teaching and learning of the foundation subjects, and we are focussing on developing a deep understanding of the knowledge and skills that we are teaching, rather than the outcomes.

In order to assess the **impact** of our intent and implementation, we believe that we must build on a holistic approach to learning, where the needs of the whole child must be met. Our previous Ofsted inspection agreed that our work to "promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding." We are working hard to instil in our children a thirst for knowledge and a true development of a range of skills, including basic skills and skills for life. With the implementation of our curriculum drivers and curriculum journals and our investment into the professional development of our staff as subject leaders, we are excited to continue monitoring the impact of our curriculum development throughout this year and beyond.

THE BASIS OF OUR CURRICULUM

We follow the statutory EYFS framework and National Curriculum at our school. This forms the basis of all subjects and concepts taught to our children. Although the new curriculum has been officially described as 'knowledge based', we believe that for any lesson to be effective, it must be exciting and enjoyable for the children. Therefore, we felt that as well as meeting the statutory requirements for the new curriculum, we must also retain the creative aspects of teaching and learning that have always been part of our school ethos and undeniably one of our strengths. As a result, from Early Years to Year 6 we strive to provide creative and enjoyable teaching and learning opportunities to engage, excite and enthuse all of our learners.

PLANNING AND TOPICS

All year groups have their own planning, based around a central theme or topic e.g. The Rainforest, on a termly basis (except EYFS, where the topics are half-termly). Through working and planning with a thematic approach, our children tend to retain more knowledge and we can provide a more stimulating, richer curriculum which is fully inclusive, whilst still delivering lessons that meet the more demanding requirements of the curriculum. Our pupils love our topics and feedback from our curriculum ambassadors prove that this is a vital part of our curriculum design. It is important to note that we aim to make links between subjects

during the planning and teaching of each topic, although where this is not possible, subjects are consequently taught as discreet units.

CURRICULUM JOURNALS - HOSTED BY PADLET

We are strong believers in the value of learning outside the classroom and through play and talk. As a school, we proudly plan and deliver as many practical, exciting learning opportunities as we can to keep our children engaged and to enhance our curriculum offer. We have kept curriculum journals for many years and this year we have decided to make these digital to save time and expense. The expectation is that class teachers will update these at least once a week. As some subjects lend themselves to practical learning more than others, there is no expectation for the number of entries per subject. Logins will be shared with parents and Padlets will be password protected to ensure safeguarding. We will also share these internally as a form of monitoring for subject leaders.

CURRICULUM AMBASSADORS

For a number of years, we have carefully selected two children per year group to act as a curriculum ambassador for their class. These children are chosen based on their engagement, enjoyment and achievement in all of the foundation subjects and have a very important role in our curriculum monitoring routine. As part of curriculum monitoring, we seek ideas and opinions from our curriculum ambassadors and their feedback is always given back to our teaching team. Whilst this feedback is often celebratory and provides great evidence for our subject leaders in the value of their subject, it also gives us food for thought when considering how we deliver our lessons and what children think about our topics. Curriculum ambassadors occasionally take questionnaires into their classrooms in order to collect information and anecdotes from their classmates in order to provide us with feedback from a wider range of children. Our curriculum ambassadors greatly enjoy their role in school and their photos are on our curriculum board so that they can feel valued and enjoy a sense of pride.

LEADERSHIP AND MONITORING:

Curriculum Policies

Below is a list of the subjects that we teach in our school. Please refer to each individual subject's policy in order to understand each curriculum area in greater depth.

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Computing
- PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education & Citizenship)
- R.E. (Religious Education)
- P.E. (Physical Education)
- History
- Geography
- Music

- Art and Design
- D.T. (Design and Technology)
- Modern Foreign Languages (KS2 only)

Leadership and Management

Our Senior Leadership Team at Abacus aims to ensure that our curriculum is monitored effectively on a regular basis. Monitoring will include lesson observations, children's feedback and learning environment walks, and it is our intention to monitor the teaching and learning across our school to ensure that we are providing our pupils with access to a broad and balanced curriculum and high-quality teaching across all curriculum areas.

Subject Leadership

Our curriculum responsibilities are arranged so that staff lead subject areas linked to their degree subjects, or in line with their personal interests and strengths. All Foundation Subject Leaders have responsibility for the long-term planning of their subject across the school, which is then filtered down to Phases and organised into terms. This ensures that we have adequate coverage of National Curriculum objectives and can be tracked and assessed using Target Tracker or other tracking tools designed to accompany our chosen schemes of work (in Art and PE). Additionally, our subject leaders have greater control over the specific details of their subjects, ensuring that there are no unnecessary overlaps of knowledge or activities. This ensures that our subject leaders have a good understanding of how their subject is taught at our school and the progression of their subject across the whole primary age range.

Subject leaders conduct monitoring of planning and lessons during specially allocated time made available to them on a regular basis, as appropriate. During this time, they will monitor work in books and displays, speak to children, review progression across the school and observe lessons, giving feedback in the following staff meeting. These responsibilities are in addition to managing their budget and resources.

REVIEW

The curriculum at our school is monitored by individual subject leaders, with overall monitoring responsibility undertaken by the curriculum leaders, who ultimately report to the Senior Management Team. This policy should be updated at least annually, or reviewed as appropriate. This policy was updated in January 2023 and is due for review in 2024.