

Lessness Heath Primary School



Curriculum Policy

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To be reviewed: Annually

Background

The new Primary National Curriculum states: 'The national curriculum provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge that they need to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said; and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement. The national curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in week, term and year to range beyond the national curriculum specifications. The national curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills, as part of the wider school curriculum.

At Lessness we believe that our children have the right to a broad and balanced curriculum. The curriculum of the school underpins all the learning that takes place and an engaging and inspirational curriculum can foster curiosity and a passion for learning, so that children may develop into lifelong learners.

Our school values underpin all that we do as a school:

- Responsibility
- Respect
- Co-operation
- Perseverance
- Belonging
- Honesty

Aims of the School

In the summer term 2016, we redesigned our curriculum to ensure that there were more opportunities for subjects to be linked, so that learning would be purposeful and meaningful for children, and so that they would apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills across the curriculum.

Our main aim in developing our curriculum was to ensure that the curriculum inspires children to learn. The range of subjects helps children to acquire knowledge, understanding, and skills, in all aspects of their education. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and, within this, the promotion of fundamental British Values, are at the heart of the school's work.

At Lessness, we believe that we have designed a curriculum model that reaches every child within the school, including children from disadvantaged backgrounds with the development of key skills. The model excites, inspires and motivates our children and staff, making learning purposeful and allowing children to recognise the part they play within the community at school.

Whole – School Theme Based Learning

Each term, or half term, the four teams at the school (Early Years, Key Stage One, Lower Key Stage Two and Upper Key Stage Two) immerse themselves in a cross-curricular theme. These themes are exciting topics that act as stimuli for all of the learning that takes place within most of the curriculum subjects. Our themes allow for subjects to be linked and for there to be a context to the skills the children are learning.

When selecting topic themes, we give much thought to selecting topics which:

- Place the development of children’s literacy at the heart of all learning;
- Are broad enough to allow for a range of curriculum subjects to be explored in sufficient depth across the school;
- Can be explored at an appropriate depth and level of challenge;
- Enthuse staff and children;
- Allow for exciting ‘wow’ events to take place to capture children’s imagination;
- Are accessible for all children of all abilities including those with SEN and EAL.

Breadth, Depth and Progression

Breadth: In selecting the topic themes, staff carefully choose topics that allow a broad range of curriculum subjects to be explored. Therefore, staff give careful consideration in selecting themes that can be taken in a variety of directions, exploring a wide range of skills across the curriculum. In some themes, certain subjects are more prominent than others. For example, in a History based theme, there may be less Geography occurring. It is the role of the subject leaders and the senior leadership team to ensure that adequate time is dedicated to each subject across the school. It is also part of the role of subject leaders to ensure that the themes facilitate the provision of their subject and to suggest ways that staff could link the themes to their subject.

Depth: We understand that the topic themes must allow for the depth of study to be maintained in each year group. In order to ensure that this happens, staff only make links to the theme when it is appropriate and, if skills or knowledge need to be taught discretely, they will take place. Subject Leaders take responsibility for monitoring the breadth and depth at which their subjects are taught.

Progression: With each year group in a team following the same theme, it is important to ensure that progression takes place. Teachers have access to progression documents for each subject and these are used to ensure that the lessons they are planning for each subject are age and level appropriate. Subject Leaders monitor these documents to ensure that teachers are providing appropriate challenge across the curriculum.

Effective Teaching: A broad and balanced curriculum must go hand in hand with effective teaching. It is our belief that good teaching leads to good learning and progress. In planning across the curriculum, teachers will ensure a range of learning styles are accommodated so that all children can be engaged. Best practice is shared after the termly round of lesson observations and book scrutiny.

'Wow! Opportunities

We believe that children should frequently experience a sense of awe and wonder in their learning. Our curriculum model allows for frequent opportunities for teachers to provide these moments. For each topic theme, the staff consider how these moments can be achieved. It is usual for topics to begin with a 'WOW Starter'. There are also opportunities for class teachers to take their classes on trips specific to their learning or for visits in the local community.

We believe in allowing the children the opportunity to learn from 'experts' in whatever area they are studying. Therefore, authors, scientists, performers and musicians are invited into school regularly to provide the children with an insight as to how the skills they are learning at school can lead to success in later life. These 'wow' opportunities are not viewed in isolation, but provide a stimulus for work across the curriculum.

Parental Involvement

We understand the importance of parental involvement and the impact that support from home can have on a child's education. Therefore, we strive to maintain good communication with parents, keeping them informed of what the children will be learning and how they can support this at home. A termly newsletter informs parents of what the children will be learning during the next term, with suggestions of how parents could best support their learning.

We provide regular opportunities for parents to join us in school to learn about our topics and how we teach. From midway through the autumn term, the parents of children in the Foundation Stage are welcome to join for our 'Stay and Play' sessions. Parents are also invited into school for concerts, assemblies, Christmas performances and end of term productions, with the intention of sharing and celebrating the work that has happened in school.

Parent's evenings happen three times per year and all parents are welcomed into school for a meeting with their child's teacher regarding their learning and general development. This is supplemented by the end of year reports, which show the children's academic levels, progress, and performance, in the context of our school values.

Each year, a parent's questionnaire is sent out in order to gain parent views on a number of issues, including the curriculum. The results are compiled and a summary is provided for staff, parents, and governors, so that they can see how their views are making an impact on school development.

Role of Subject Leaders

Subject Leaders provide professional leadership and management for a subject to secure high quality teaching, effective use of resources, and improved standard of learning and achievement for all pupils. Since the introduction of the National Curriculum, there has been an expectation that all teachers, after successfully gaining Newly Qualified Teacher Status, will take an additional responsibility. This forms part of their standard teaching duties; the amount of responsibility, and the number of subjects that a teacher leads is often dependent on the experience of the teacher. As we approach the implementation of the new National Curriculum, strong subject leadership is essential as we wish to provide our children with an

enriched, broad, and balanced curriculum. Subject leadership falls into two categories: Core Subject Leadership (Maths, English and Science) and Foundation Subject Leadership (all other subjects).

Leadership is also required for other school initiatives such as the Junior Leadership Team. Subject Leaders are responsible and accountable for the subject throughout the school and are expected to possess an in-depth knowledge of the provision of their subject.

The key roles of Subject Leaders are:

- Ensuring that there is a policy for the subject and that this is kept up to date and in line with national policy;
- Writing, monitoring and evaluating a termly action plan for their subject;
- Monitoring the provision of the subject through observations, work scrutiny and planning scrutiny;
- Ensuring that resources are plentiful, up-to-date and in good condition;
- Ensuring progression takes place across the school;
- Provide guidance and training to staff within their area of expertise;
- Assist with planning, teaching, assessment and reporting within their subject;
- Keep well informed of any assessment that takes place for their subject;
- Ensure that their subject has a high profile within the school;
- Organising whole-school events such as enrichment days for their subject;
- Regularly report the provision of their subject to the Senior Leadership Team;
- Representing the school in local cluster groups;
- Each Faculty carries a budget and decides how it is to be spent in the subject areas they are responsible for. Subject Leaders are accountable for managing their budget.

The Curriculum and Inclusion

Like all aspects of school life, the curriculum is designed to be accessible to all. It is expected that all children have the opportunity to learn in a creative and encouraging learning environment that encompasses a range of learning and teaching styles. If children are identified as having special educational needs, we will do all we can to ensure that the needs of these children are met. In most instances, class teachers will be able to provide the resources and support required to enable these children to access the curriculum at a level that is appropriate to them. If class teachers feel that it is necessary to modify the curriculum in order to meet the needs of children with more severe special educational needs, then this will be done in consultation with the SENCO.

Our curriculum model also allows for children who are identified as Gifted or Talented in specific areas to be extended in their learning. Leaders promote equality of opportunity and diversity when planning for inclusion in the curriculum, so that the ethos and culture of the whole school counters any form of direct or indirect discriminatory behaviour. Leaders, staff, and pupils do not tolerate prejudiced behaviour, and tolerance and acceptance is promoted widely.

Planning

Planning takes place across the curriculum in three waves: long term planning, medium term (for the entire half term,) and daily lesson plans.

