



## **Academy Curriculum Statement 2016-17**

### **Engagement, Depth, Challenge**

In September 2016 the school launched its exciting new Stockland Curriculum model focussed on engaging pupils, challenging pupils and allowing them to achieve in greater depth. It recognises that research and national policy show children are best prepared for the future when at Primary level they obtain not only knowledge, but a deep understanding of concepts, skills and ideas which they can connect together and apply in a range of contexts. A philosophy that has become known as 'Mastery'.

Since the new 2014 national curriculum each politician, school and teacher has had to grapple with what Mastery actually means in the landscape of many conflicting national messages. Through much discussion as a staff the current working definition of 'Mastery' at Stockland is as follows:

**'That children understand a concept or skill to such a deep level that they can articulate it and apply it naturally within a range of contexts over time'.** (April 2015)

To allow this to happen the curriculum must both develop the concepts and skills to a high level and create a rich environment for children to apply them. It is this premise along with other key drivers which have led to the development of our new curriculum.

Class teachers use Cornerstone Curriculum to generate an exciting topic based learning journey for children. Each learning journey has four phases: 'Engage', 'Develop', 'Innovate' and 'Express'. These are called learning projects and last approximately a half term.

Every project features a weekly English plan that develops over the course of a week giving you a head start to plan for more detailed group activities. As well as that, Literacy is integral to all subjects, giving children the opportunity to use their reading, writing and language skills across the curriculum.

## **Subject Statements - Approaches and philosophies underpinning curriculum**

### **Literacy**

In Literacy we use a 'Dialogic Approach' which enables the children to engage with a text and discuss with others their understanding. This further enhances their comprehension skills and allows them to make informed judgments about an author's choice of language or use of punctuation for effect. By using a class reader text, the children are able to hear how to include expression and take note of punctuation and language to read. They then have the opportunity to practice these skills with their partner by reading out loud to each other. The children work in mixed ability groups which in turn provide support for completing tasks. This approach means that all children in the group are able to contribute at their own level and have further discussion with their peers regarding the content of a text. We also utilise elements of 'Talk for Writing' where the children learn a model of writing style. We then further develop this into a structured class piece of writing. The groups, with support, then complete a similar task and are encouraged to view and discuss work from other groups. This leads to an independent assessment of a similar nature. Because the children have received support from the class and group they are much more confident about completing the task.

Within the group we utilise specific jobs: Manager - responsible for collecting the information from the teacher and explaining it to the group; Assistant - helps with collecting books and also ensuring all the children in the group complete the same task; Recorder - when completing a group activity they will record the decision the group has made and finally the Reporter - this child reports the group's decision back to the class. Each of these jobs is rotated during each week and helps build confidence and allow for a more even distribution of engagement within the class. All the children once they have completed an assessment are encouraged to edit their work and to discuss where they might be able to improve it with the use of vocabulary and/or punctuation prior to it being marked. We use a mixture of formative and summative assessment to measure progress, inform the children of their next steps and set curricular targets. At the end of each year the children in year groups other than Year 2 and 6 complete Optional SATs.

Children are expected to be able to reproduce a consistent quality of writing across the curriculum and succeed in applying genre specific features in a range of writing within the Connected Curriculum allowing the assessment of Mastery.

### **Maths**

The school has evolved an innovative Maths curriculum which combines three highly acclaimed approaches. These are; a Shanghai Maths approach which raises attainment and progress results through greater depth and challenge, Singapore teaching resources called 'Maths no problem' which give a rigorous structure and high quality resources and the number fluency and algebraic approach developed here by Mrs. Ainsworth using Cuisenaire

rods as manipulatives. A key element of this approach in our curriculum is 'Instant Intervention'. Teaching Assistants and teachers are able to support children in morning or afternoon lessons outside the Maths lesson to access and understand concepts they find challenging. This means children are then ready to make further progress in the next lesson and do not fall behind. Class 1 have 4 morning Maths lessons and an additional Wednesday afternoon slot focussing purely on use of Cuisenaire rods to develop number concepts, patterns, relationships and comparisons. The rods are used to help children understand the structure of the mathematics and to use algebra from their first contact with the subject. Our methods are based on work by Caleb Gattengo and Madelaine Goutard, who achieved astonishing results using Cuisenaire rods in the 1960s. At Stockland we have studied and developed their methods and have found that, in addition to gaining sound mental calculation strategies, the children respond with enjoyment and curiosity about the subject. This leads to an appreciation of the beauty and power of mathematics.

Children in the Reception class enjoy playing with the rods, making patterns, staircases and pictures, but through their play are soon absorbed in learning about symmetry, sequences and number relationships. The children are then introduced to addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and fractions using the rods to visually see and label each operation. We introduce children to the place value system again using Gattengo's methods. Children from an early age are therefore able to work with large numbers, which all children enjoy!

Part of every lesson is set aside for children to write their own maths equations and explore their own interests. They investigate prime numbers, powers, roots, factorials and many other rich and sophisticated areas of mathematics, often using the rods to support their thinking.

Parents who are introduced to the approach their children will be using often comment: 'Why wasn't I taught like that?! The rods make it easy to understand.'

At Stockland we believe all children have the ability to reach high levels of achievement in mathematics and that our unique approach to using the Cuisenaire rods plays a valuable part in helping them do so.

## **Science**

In science children are encouraged to work as scientists, raising and answering investigative questions in order to help them deepen their understanding of scientific concepts and explain scientific phenomena. We capitalise on children's natural curiosity to stimulate their creative thought and develop their scientific enquiry skills. Our pupils develop a keen interest in science that they will take with them and build upon in the future. Children are taught different topics each half-term which follow the National Curriculum Programme of Study as part of the Cornerstone Curriculum learning projects. At the end of each topic the children are assessed according to NC criteria.

**Physical Education** is taught 3 times a week. Two of these lessons are sport focussed with a specialist sports coach Mr. Murnane. Research continues to suggest physical activity

increases children's ability to learn. These PE lessons also allow children to develop the skills needed to succeed in sporting fixtures and coaching on Wednesday afternoons. A third PE lesson is delivered by the class teacher either in Dance or Gymnastics linked to the Cornerstone Curriculum project. Class1 have 3 PE lessons within the week.

## **Religious Education**

As a V.C Church of England school we follow the Diocese of Exeter's R.E syllabus. As in Literacy, we use a dialogic approach to allow the children to ask questions and share their views about Christianity and other religions. The children are taught about Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism and Islam and of non religious world views such as humanism and those of no faith. We look at various aspects of each faith and how they are similar or different to Christian beliefs, how each religion demonstrates their faith to others and the particular ways that they teach their family to continue their faith. Through the use of the internet, video clips and class discussion they are able to understand the differences and similarities between the major world religions. The children also have the opportunity to explore their own beliefs and develop an open tolerance and respect within a non-prejudicial view of other religions. The Diocese of Exeter Understand Christianity pilot along with access to the local Church means we are able give the children a more hands on access to the Christian faith, the buildings and beliefs. Class teachers will decide whether to teach R.E weekly or to block it depending how units link to their Cornerstone Curriculum topic.

## **Assessing and evidencing Depth of Learning**

Formative assessment is based around children applying skills from core subjects within the context of the Cornerstone topic. This will help us as a school to evidence children achieving 'Mastery' in curriculum objectives from the core subjects. This approach also gives teaching staff opportunities to record and ideally rectify misconceptions as they arise from children within the application of concepts and skills in the Cornerstone Curriculum. Half termly Summative assessment judgments are recorded in School Pupil Tracker Online and include a 'depth of learning rating'. This ensures that as a school we are not only assessing children's understanding of skills and concepts, but their application across contexts over time (See mastery definition above).

## **Limitless learning**

The nature of the Cornerstone Curriculum model means that through careful and continuous engagement with parents, any number of extension tasks, homework activities and dialogue can take place beyond the teaching sessions. This leads to children really taking ownership of their learning and taking it as far as they wish with support of parents. This leads to greater 'general knowledge' and world awareness in children and encourages the enthusiasm and curiosity needed to become a lifelong learner.