



**Holtsmere End Junior School
Curriculum Policy
Spring 2022
To be reviewed: Spring 2023**

Curriculum Intent – how we designed our curriculum

'Where children flourish'

Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and the children so that children can learn to weave a world for themselves.” (Parker Palmer)

When planning a curriculum, Holtsmere End Junior School has had to recognise the very wide social and economic backgrounds of our families. The school is on the Woodhall Farm Estate in Hemel Hempstead– which according to Public Health England using indicators for socio-economics, 13.9% of children in Dacorum live in poverty. However at any one time Holtsmere End Junior School have a considerably higher proportion of disadvantaged children at around 30%. The school currently has a high percentage of children with special educational needs and the curriculum intent for these children is essential to consider.

Hence the school has a significant number of families who require a lot of support, sign posting and care. Within PSHE and citizenship, account is made of the socio-economics of the area and we recognise that the children need both a sense of valuing themselves, and developing aspirations for their future and for their community. We have designed our termly curriculum enrichment weeks to provide a breadth of experience within a subject area, drawing on outside speakers, involvement of parents and developing a sense of curiosity. Careers advice often features within the curriculum enrichment weeks and enables visitors (including parents) to meet with the children and expose them to life outside school, providing them with ideas for their future. We are passionate that all children realise that it is a big and wonderful world out there that they can play an active and positive part in. To do this not only do we pursue excellence but ensure the children are equipped with the correct skills in which to do this. We play an important part in providing the means for social mobility. We maintain close links with the local community such as the positive working relationship with the local primary schools. We also plan opportunities for the children to know about keeping safe, linked to the KCSiE document (Keeping Children Safe In Education Sept 2021). We also plan for and promote British values, (Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs) ensuring that children are aware of their rights and responsibilities as a UK citizen.

The wellbeing agenda is at the heart of Holtsmere End Junior School’s curriculum. Children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children show themselves to be deep thinkers. They are able to empathise with the feelings and actions of others, seeing points of views and beliefs other than

their own. Particularly in RE and PSHE, they show a keen interest in ethical issues and are able to apply their personal values to situations, giving reasons for their decisions and actions. They are ready to question arguments and situations

In recognising the development of the whole child the pastoral support given to children so they can access the curriculum is strong. Nurture sits at heart of our school, and it allows vulnerable children to access their learning and curriculum entitlement. The school has various systems which support the emotional and mental well-being of children and provides signposting to their parents. The employment of a Learning Mentor to support children's wellbeing has a continuing positive impact.

Emotional and mental wellbeing is also greatly enhanced by sport. Sport has remained central to both our curriculum and extra-curricular provision. We also believe the pedagogy of P.E. in sport affects other areas of the curriculum and really enhances children's learning, physiologically allowing better learning to happen, as well as children's learning skills such as listening, problem solving, teamwork and resilience. We have invested heavily with the P.E. and sport provision, with inclusion a priority for all. The school believes that this is an area of strength and parent surveys also convey this.

Staff annually review their medium-term planning to ensure topics are relevant to the children's interests and needs. Subject leaders ensure curriculum coverage in the wider curriculum, e.g. Geography and History, with all middle leaders being aware of the curriculum expectations and in turn plan the progression of knowledge and skills within their respective curriculum areas. The curriculum is designed to ensure: deep learning, with focus made on extending those who are working at a greater depth within the curriculum areas; engagement with their learning and initiating the direction of the units of study, particularly in the wider curriculum along with breadth and balance. Not only do staff review the actual curriculum regularly, but also the principles for learning and teaching. There is also a focus on supporting children's learning through the use of writing frames and vocabulary discussions to help children to access the curriculum.

Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of the [National Curriculum programmes of study](#), which all maintained schools in England must teach.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's [Governance Handbook](#).

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- Enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements

- Suitable provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- It fulfils its role in processes to disapply pupils from all or part of the National Curriculum, where appropriate, and in any subsequent appeals

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board
- Where appropriate, the individual needs of some pupils are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from all or part of the National Curriculum
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The governing board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The governing board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Suitable provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

Other staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

In reviewing the successes of the New curriculum in 2015 Staff agreed that the curriculum would also continue to provide:

- Challenge and Choice
- Make it Real, eg events brought to life
- Collaboration –sharing strengths in planning and teaching
- Create real end products
- Making links-deepen learning
- Application of skills – cross curricular skills.
- Slowing down, going deeper with learning
- Practical
- Specialist teacher support/ CPD – Computing, PE, French, Art, Music and Maths training opportunities
- Resources to support the learning
- Visits, workshops great to stimulate learning and bring learning to life.
- Children leading the learning whenever possible.

The Hidden Curriculum – Life-long Learning and 'The 6 Rs'

In today's work climate, there is now a need to shift the focus of the curriculum to lifelong skills and preparing children for life after school. Children need to achieve but they also need confidence and resilience in today's competitive world.

'What is going to make our children stand out from the rest?'

We know that high academic standards are underpinned by good attitudes to learning. These should be referred to as often as possible. We call these the '**6Rs**'. They are:

- **Resilience**
- **Reflection**
- **Risk**
- **Relationships**
- **Resourceful**
- **Remembering**

Organisation and Planning

We plan our curriculum in three phases. We agree a long-term plan for each subject as a two year overview. This indicates what topics are to be taught in each term. With our medium-term plans, we give clear guidance on the objectives and teaching strategies that we use when teaching each topic. Our short-term plans are those that our teachers write on a weekly basis.

The curriculum is taught in discrete subjects but where relevant and strong links can be made these are used to integrate as much learning as possible.

We have agreed that our planning will be based on three principles:

1. Making it Real
 - a. We will ensure that we base opportunities for learning on real and relevant experiences.
 - b. We will engage our children through creative experiences that are relevant to them and the world they live in
 - c. Use stimulus (hook) – a visit, visitors, artefacts, videos, plays, books etc.
2. Using Pupils' to help steer the journey
 - a. Taking account of questions and lines of enquiry that the children raise within the framework of content
 - b. Involving them in how we can explore these lines of enquiry and how we can demonstrate and present our learning in areas studied
3. Avoid over planning
 - a. Allow for flexibility to take account of the above two points. The planning should enable teachers to respond to the needs of the pupils not just teach them a range of content.

In addition to the three principles all teachers will:

- Demonstrate an enthusiasm and interest for a subject to further encourage the children.
- Use children's interests to make learning **relevant** to them.
- Make use of current events and opportunities.
- Consider the timing in the academic year (When in the year should we teach certain topics to give children better access to outdoor learning and relevance e.g. seed dispersal in the Autumn)

- Consider resource implications

Learning and Teaching

Learning and teaching will be in line with the school's '**Teaching and Learning Policy**'. Teaching will always aim to provide real and relevant activities. We have agreed to ensure that:

- The teaching sequence will start with the concrete and move through to the abstract.
- Teaching will encourage the use of real apparatus and resources.
- Teaching will be differentiated through challenge and choice (not just by outcome).
- The vocabulary will be made explicit and reinforced through opportunities in the rest of the curriculum (e.g. topic words for spelling activities) and vocabulary discussion starts within the wider curriculum.
- Some subjects will be taught through weekly subject lessons whilst others will be themed weeks, blocked topic (cross-curricular links) and through English lessons. The approach is flexible.
- There is a good balance between practical and written work to ensure children have a range of opportunities and experiences and there is good evidence of learning.
- The mode of working is a mix of class teaching, cooperative group work, individual work and differentiated challenges.
- Groups are usually of mixed ability and are encouraged to communicate their findings in a variety of ways.
- Practical work is a purposeful and integral part of the curriculum.
- Children's learning and work is recognised in general display in classrooms and corridors.
- Key questions are often used to direct pupils' thinking and enquiry
- Resources are varied, relevant and of good quality
- Teachers use effective starters and plenaries to ensure children fully understand and can evaluate their learning and their progression

Extra-Curricular Activities

We believe in developing the whole child and aim to provide a rich variety of additional opportunities for children at Holtsmere including:

- Football
- Netball
- Athletics
- Cricket
- Dance
- Singing
- Gymnastics
- Cheerleading
- Basketball

Assessment

Assessment for the core subjects will use the Herts for Learning model as a guide to track progress towards the end of year statements.

Opportunities must be given for the children to access and achieve these essential objectives. Teachers will make assessments of the children in non core subjects on a termly basis and record these judgements. Subject leaders will analyse the data on a termly basis and include in their individual subject evaluation.

Subject Specific Information

For more information please refer to the subject specific policies.

Reading

Teaching of spelling – we use the HFL Essential spelling programme and children will begin this in year 3 although some children will continue with a phonics teaching intervention.

At Holtsmere End Junior School, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. Therefore, we teach reading through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. Phonics assessments are completed upon entry to the school and are used alongside transition information from the Infants school to identify the next steps for children and gaps in phonics understanding. We use the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

Children will be encouraged to develop a love of reading through visiting the library weekly and will receive guidance and support from our school librarian.

We have a structured reading approach comprising of a number of published schemes that band together to provide depth, progression and variety for children. They are then able to become a ‘free reader’ and can choose from age appropriate materials from the library organised in year group shelves. We expect children to read four times a week and to have their reading records signed – this can be independently or with an adult depending on their level.

Whole class teaching of reading exposes children to a variety of texts and to explore: language, structure, composition, plot, character, author intent and many more features. Some small group sessions are used to practise a specific skill e.g. inference.

Lexia, an on line programme, supports the practice of phonics in the school and is used alongside the explicit teaching of phonics for some pupils.

Organisation and planning

Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEN
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report.

The school are committed to improving the vocabulary of the pupils and therefore subject specific and age related vocabulary is included on subject plans for all year groups.

Monitoring arrangements

Governors monitor coverage of National Curriculum subjects and compliance with other statutory requirements through:

- School visits, meetings with the school council and Head teacher reports.
- Planning scrutinies, learning walks, book scrutinies and discussions with subject leaders

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Assessment policy
- SEN policy and information report
- Equality information and objectives
- Pupil premium strategy
- Individual subject policies
- Spelling, phonics and vocabulary policy