



Barcombe Hamsey Plumpton Iford & Kingston

Skylark Federation

Curriculum Policy

Reviewed and approved by FGB: 01.02.24

Next review: Spring 2027

Curriculum Policy

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The Skylark Curriculum is one that is ambitious and designed to help learners to remember in the long term the content they have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts (Ofsted, May 2019, pg. 9 and 10). We have constructed a curriculum that is designed to give all learners the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. It places at its heart 'Intent, Implementation and Impact'.

The Skylark curriculum is bespoke to our federation of small schools which are situated close to the South Downs and to the county town of Lewes. It is relevant to our pupils' lives, focussing particularly on local issues and events but also those further afield, both national and international.

To achieve this, we have modelled our curriculum on Jonathan Lear's Discover, Explore and Create curriculum model, which sees all learners at the Skylark Federation critically analysing in History, Geography, DT and the Arts across the academic year. These Discover (History), Explore (Geography and DT) and Create (the Arts) projects form the backbone of our projects across the year.

Intent:

Our 'Intent' in designing our bespoke, South Downs curriculum is for all subjects to be relevant and have a strong local resonance with pupils. In doing so, our intention is that all learners have the opportunity to flourish through a curriculum that is tangible and real for pupils of the South Downs. That is not to say our curriculum is narrow-sighted: we use children's local understanding to project their minds across the globe. We are an outward-looking Federation of village schools. Our aim is for our pupils to think like historians, geographers, engineers, artists and musicians as they focus in depth on each of those subjects, developing a deep understanding of what they are studying.

Implementation:

Our village schools have mixed-age classes which necessitates a rolling programme of projects over a three-year cycle. Each year follows the same basic structure with a long term being devoted to each of the overarching project themes of Discover (History), Explore (Geography and DT) and Create (the Arts), but a different focus being applied in each year:

Discover: Year A – Treasure; Year B - Conflict; Year C – Ancestors

Explore: Year A – Home; Year B – Water; Year C – Danger

Create: Year A – Landscape; Year B – Portrait; Year C – Still Life

To help teaching teams plan, Essential Knowledge documents have been written outlining what pupils must learn in each project. These are based on National Curriculum requirements. Alongside this, Progression of Skills documents are also used as part of the planning process.

The mixed-age class structure means that some pupils may stay in one class for two years. To avoid repetition, a tracking document has been written which outlines a child's learning journey through his/her time in the Skylark schools.

A key question is chosen for each project. These are philosophical questions, for example 'Where do I belong?' or 'Is all conflict bad?' The projects are underpinned by key concepts (for example identity, sustainability, community, power) – a list of concepts covered is kept to ensure a balance over the years a child is in school.

The projects include meaningful experiences aimed at an audience: exhibitions, presentations and videos finish off the projects so the children can articulate what they have learnt.

Some subjects are delivered using schemes of work, but there is an expectation that teachers make adaptations to make the learning relevant to the children and to their local experiences, and where possible, links with the Discover, Explore or Create project driver are sought:

Maths – teachers draw from White Rose, NCETM and other high-quality resources.

Science – Developing Experts is used as the basis but the tasks are adapted and extra activities are added.

RE – The East Sussex Agreed Syllabus forms the basis of our RE lessons.

Music (other than in the Create project) – SingUp is used to develop listening, appraising, performing and composing skills.

Computing – Purple Mash units of work are used.

PSHE – Jigsaw is used.

PE – Get Set 4 PE is used.

Subject leadership teams are drawn from across the Federation and support all four schools. Subject leaders lead staff meetings to update other teachers about developments in their subject. They have subject leader release days where they observe teaching, look at books and carry out pupil voice surveys. The findings are fed back to all staff with details of what is going well and points for development.

Each subject leadership team writes the Intent, Implementation and Impact statements for their subject; these are found on each school's website under 'Curriculum'.

Impact

We believe that assessment is central to curriculum design and delivery. It is a dynamic process that is used to decide where learners are in their learning and where they need to go next.

We use formative methods to assess pupils developing understanding throughout the learning process, and summative assessments that focus on 'threshold concepts' - key indicators that relate to a transformed view (or depth of understanding) within each subject discipline. These threshold concepts are based on analysis of sources – can the child think like a historian, geographer, engineer, artist or musician when talking about a source they have not previously encountered? The threshold style of assessment is also applied to other areas of the curriculum not covered by the overarching projects.