




Meadowside Community Primary & Nursery School

A Member of **The Challenge Academy Trust**

Curriculum Policy

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Date Policy Written	Summer 2022
Date To Be Agreed by Governors	October 2022
Next Review	September 2023
Head teacher	Mr S Wright 
Chair of Governors	Mr P Calrow

Version	Date	Action
1	Sept 22	New policy to reflect evolved curriculum for 2022-23

'Where Learners Grow'

This Policy Should be read alongside the following policies:

- Homework Policy
- SEND Policy
- Individual Subject Policies
- Behaviour Policy
- Remote Learning Policy

Multi Academy Trust Curriculum Intent



As a TCAT academy, our curriculum is designed based upon the principles set out in the OECD Learning Framework 2030. We will help every young person:

- develop as a **whole person**
- fulfil his/her **potential**
- contribute towards a future built upon the social and economic **well-being** of the **individual, the local community and the wider world**

Academies within TCAT will provide a broad and balanced curriculum which prepares young people for the social, economic and environmental challenges of modern living. We will encourage our young people to value individual and collective **well-being, prosperity** and **sustainability**.

We will promote the knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs and values necessary to support future ready young people who are able to exercise '**learner agency**' and to take responsibility for their own education and to **participate positively in the world**. We will do this by providing a **solid foundation** of language development which ensures literacy, numeracy, general knowledge, digital/technological competence, physical health & well-being and enable them to mobilise disciplinary and inter-disciplinary knowledge, cognitive and social skills and attitudes and values to meet complex demands.

Our Curriculum Intent and Rationale

1. Language Development

Our curriculum aims to be talk and vocabulary rich to help counter inequality, widen access to learning and improve life opportunities [1]. Therefore, Language Development is key to the curriculum at Meadowside. Research has shown a language and communication deficit for some pupils, particularly pupils from low-income households. Our school has a higher level of deprivation among our pupils (see IDACI rating) and therefore language development is key to the educational success of our pupils. If we are to achieve our mission statement, ensuring that they fully access their next steps in education and go on to engage in the wider world work and to build a better future individually, locally and for the wider world, then language development must be central. Our curriculum aims to be talk and vocabulary rich to help counter inequality, widen access to learning and improve life opportunities. Talk can also foster empathy and understanding contributing to the development of our attitudes and values shown below.

- **Teaching of Oracy** is key to this language development. 'Great speakers are made, not born' (Gaunt and Stott) [2]. We aim to employ strategies throughout the curriculum to develop the physical, linguistic, cognitive and social and emotional aspects of learning.
- **'Dialogic teaching** harnesses the power of talk to engage interest, stimulate thinking, advance understanding, expand ideas, and build and evaluate arguments, empowering students for lifelong learning and democratic engagement.' (Alexander) [3]
- **Vocabulary Development** "By closing the vocabulary gap for children within our classroom with their peers, we can offer them the vital academic tools for school success, alongside the capability to communicate with confidence in the world beyond the school gates" (Quigley) [1]. Vocabulary development is pivotal to our curriculum and it is planned, sequenced and explicitly taught.
- **Reading** Dickenson et al [4] suggests that "reading offers our children the opportunity to hear new vocabulary items embedded in varied grammatical sentences. Books written for children use well-formed, relatively short sentences that are rich in varied vocabulary. Furthermore, books often use the same words in diverse grammatical constructions, offering implicit lessons in how words are used. The texts of books tend to have more low-frequency words than does spoken language [5] and books encourage use of a wider range of words than would occur in everyday conversations. Senechal and her colleagues [6], consistently finds that "parent reports of shared reading were a robust predictor of children's receptive and expressive vocabulary" (page 179). "

2. Knowledge

- The teaching of **knowledge** is central to our curriculum. Throughout the curriculum, both substantive knowledge (specific, factual content for the subjects) and disciplinary knowledge (knowledge of the disciplines necessary to study a subject) is specifically chosen and deliberately sequenced to ensure retention over time. The teaching of knowledge is spaced and revisited in order to have long term impact, in line with the research of Foot-Seymour and Wiseheart [7]: 'If the goal is for students to retain as much information as possible, teachers need to be aware of **cognitive strategies** like the spacing effect so they can make small changes to their teaching practice to help students become more successful.'

[1] The Vocabulary Gap, Chris Quigley

[2] Transforming Teaching and Learning Through Talk, Amy Gaunt and Alice Stott

[3] <http://robinalexander.org.uk/dialogical-teaching> (July 2020)

[4] How Reading Books Fosters Language Development and the World (November 2011)

[5] Beginning Literacy and Language: Young Children Learning at Home and School, D.K. Dickenson and P.O. Tabors (2001)

[6] A model of the concurrent and longitudinal relations between home literacy, M Senechal in Handbook for early Literacy Research, S.B Neuman and D. K. Dickinson (2011)

[7] Judging the credibility of websites: an effectiveness trial of the spacing effect in the elementary classroom, Foot-Seymour and Wiseheart (2022).

- The curriculum is organised to enable children to build webs of knowledge (**schemas**), with explicit links being drawn between new and existing knowledge [8].
- According to Blooms, the teaching of knowledge underpins **critical thinking** and a child's ability to go deeper in their learning [9]. When knowledge is secure and links have been made, children are encouraged to take this knowledge deeper and apply this critically in different situations. Oracy development then allows children to express their thinking and views.

3. Skills

- **Cognitive and Meta cognitive strategies** are used by staff in delivering the curriculum, as we believe that the children need to know how best they learn in order to improve learner agency. Therefore, ideas such as cognitive load, working memory etc. are taught throughout the curriculum so that they can develop this understanding.
- While the teaching of disciplinary knowledge is key to progress in subjects, children require the opportunity to turn this knowledge to **practice and apply** skills. Our Curriculum planning ensures that these opportunities are embedded for all children.

4. Attitudes and Values

Personal

- Developing **growth mindset** [10]. Rather than simply praising success, we praise effort and persistence. We believe the best thing to do is to teach children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort and keep on learning. For children who find work easy we make sure they encounter more difficult tasks. Our children recognise that effort, persistence and good teaching are what help them improve.
- Developing **intrinsic motivation** and **self-efficacy** [11]. Throughout the curriculum we aim for the children to see themselves as readers, writers, mathematicians, artists, musicians etc. We want their motivation for them to work in this way to be down to their understanding of themselves and the potential they have.
- We recognise the responsibility we have for the **physical development** and the **well-being** of our pupils. Our approach to our curriculum aims to build self-esteem, a respect for self and others, kindness and resilience, with staff modelling across the curriculum how to deal with challenge and adversity. We also have a role to ensure that pupils learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support. British Values permeate through the curriculum.
- Both the teaching of oracy and knowledge underpin the children's ability in **critical thinking** [9].

[8] Making Kids Cleverer, David Didau

[9] Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, BS Blooms (1965)

[10] Mindset, How you can Fulfil Your Potential, Dr Carol S Dweck (2006)

[11] Toward a Psychology of Human Agency, Bandura, A (2006)

Local, Societal and Global

- As an Inclusion Quality Mark flagship school, **inclusivity** is key to our culture as a school. Within the curriculum, we aim to celebrate difference and **diversity**.

- **Sustainability** is one of the key themes that is going to prepare our children for life in the future. Key questions about sustainability form central parts of our curriculum.
- The **Rights Respecting** agenda plays a key role in school life at Meadowside and provides a strong ethos to foster purposeful learning attitudes and positive relationships. This initiative underpins the school's aims to provide a values-led curriculum. The children learn about their own responsibilities, through learning about their own rights and the rights of others, as set out by the United Nations Convention Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Implementation

Our school's curriculum is organised in such a way as to enable children to build webs of knowledge (**schemas**), with explicit links being drawn between new and existing knowledge [8]. Both substantive and disciplinary knowledge is specifically chosen and deliberately sequenced to ensure retention over time. We recognise that new learning is fragile, so our approach is both generative and 'sticky', enabling our pupils to make links between new and existing knowledge to aid long term retention, whilst also reducing cognitive overload. This is done through well planned curriculum mapping and sequencing, ensuring a smooth progression of knowledge from EYFS right through to Year 6, which is further adapted for our two Designated Provision classes. The teaching of knowledge is spaced and revisited in order to have long term impact, in line with the research of Foot-Seymour and Wiseheart: 'If the goal is for students to retain as much information as possible, teachers need to be aware of **cognitive strategies** like the spacing effect so they can make small changes to their teaching practice to help students become more successful.' [7] Within lesson sequences we have embedded low stakes quizzes, our road map learning displays in class and recapping over prior learning. Key concepts are identified and progressively sequenced in planning units. Spaced repetition is mapped in to help pupils retain learning.

Within the Designated Provisions, learning is sequences so that children have access to the full curriculum, however progression maps are used to ensure that the disciplinary knowledge is chosen is at the right developmental level for the pupils in the class. Awareness of cognitive strategies is as key to the children in these classes alongside specific strategies used to address individual need.

Cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies are used by staff in delivering the curriculum, as we believe that the children need to know how best they learn in order to improve learner agency. Concepts such as cognitive load, working memory and retained knowledge are explained to the children through the teaching of the curriculum to enable children to build their understanding in this area. For our pupils to be able to achieve well, we know that staff need to promote positive attitudes and mindsets that allow children to engage with their learning and build their confidence. Throughout the curriculum, strategies are used to promote a growth mindset, develop self – efficacy and build intrinsic motivation. We consistently praise growth and willingness to take risks in their learning and support pupils to see themselves of learners with the ability to achieve and grow. The pupils' achievements are celebrated in daily lessons and discussion of how we can develop and grow when challenges are faced is encouraged. Rosenshine's principles relating to the aforementioned areas underpin the teaching approach used by staff. We have used his research and adapted it into a bespoke teaching approach for our school: 'Quality First Teaching at Meadowside' (Appendix 1). As a school with a larger than average percentage of children with SEND, we recognise the benefits these strategies have in widening access to knowledge and in promoting retention of learning for all pupils. Staff use these approaches across the curriculum, with the aim of giving each and every child the best possible start to their education.

Subject co-ordinators map out progressive curriculum coverage and year group specific long-term curriculum maps identify when the different subjects and topics will be taught across the academic year. Most subjects are taught discretely, but subject leads working with class teachers make meaningful links across subjects to deepen pupils' learning. Throughout the topics, Philosophy For Children Lessons are used at the end of topics (Particularly in History, Geography and PSHE/RSE) that

provides opportunities for pupils to apply knowledge and understanding by actively engaging in oracy based activities linked with real life issues and allowing them to build on the subject knowledge taught in these units.

We aim for our timetabling to provide equity across all subjects. Reading, Writing and Maths remain our longstanding focus, especially since the pandemic. We believe that these contain the keys to unlocking the wider curriculum and to more general prosperity in later life. However, senior leaders and teaching staff also ensure that sufficient, specific time is also allocated to foundation subjects, to allow children to experience the full breadth of the curriculum. Lesson time is organised across a two-weekly timetable for each class.

During COVID related school closures, Class Dojo was used to deliver a full curriculum. Whilst we are proud of the way teachers adapted to this method of delivery, we recognise that it wasn't always possible for this to be done in the depth we would do in school. We are also aware that, despite our best efforts, not all children accessed the full breadth of the curriculum at this time, for various reasons. We have therefore adapted our approach for this (and subsequent) academic years, where appropriate. Any 'perceived' lost learning will be assessed by class teachers (using both QLA and formative assessment strategies) with subject leads advising on when, where and how these key concepts can be revisited. This will also inform interventions, and more specifically the tutoring program. Plans for these are highlighted in each curriculum policy.

PSHE is given a high prominence currently to help us to address any mental health and wellbeing support that our pupils might need and respond flexibly to issues that are affecting the pupils at any one time. These are planned using guidance from the PSHE Association ensuring compliance to statutory guidance. Personal, social and emotional development is taught in discrete lessons, on special celebration days and also through assemblies, as we seek to develop the whole child. British Values are addressed through PSHE but we also look for ways to address these more explicitly across the wider curriculum and in assemblies. We ensure the children have a good knowledge of their own rights and responsibilities, through learning about their own rights and the rights of others, as set out by the United Nations Convention Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and actively encourage the children to engage in community action to see the difference they can make in these issues. We continue to ensure that our pupils build the cultural capital that they will need to be a confident member of our community. We are building up a programme of enrichment for all subject areas. This could take the form of extra-curricular clubs, school trips or visitors/renowned scholars/authors coming to school or zooming classes. The purpose of these is to cement and add value to the existing curriculum.

Language development is central to everything that we do at Meadowside. Within our school, we use Oracy as a way of enabling all pupils to develop confidence in expressing their own opinions, giving them a voice in the world. As Gaunt and Scott have stated, 'Great speakers are made, not born' [2]. We aim to employ strategies throughout the curriculum to develop the physical, linguistic, cognitive and social and emotional aspects of learning. We are also aware that Oracy is vitally important to enable the children to make progress in their writing. In the words of James Britton [12], 'Writing floats on a sea of talk'. We promote quality talk using Voice 21 strategies, encouraging our pupils to reflect upon and evaluate their views and those of others concerning themselves, their community and the world. We have the expectation that this will also improve wider academic outcomes.

[12] Language and Learning, J Britton (1970)

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum and plays a significant part in the language development of our pupils. As Mary Myatt states, [13] 'Reading a story or high-quality non-fiction text is the most efficient way to build vocabulary'. Therefore, a range of quality texts and sources help to enrich the pupil's learning experience. Pupils regularly visit our school library, both to read for pleasure and to gain access to reading material based around curriculum areas. Each class also has a reading area of both fiction and non-fiction texts and class teachers promote texts relating to current areas of learning.

Subject leads are involved in the monitoring, evaluating and improving the content of our non-fiction library as relates to our curriculum. Our reading lead ensures that there is a breadth, quality and diversity to the books that are chosen. (See Reading Curriculum Policy)

Vocabulary development is integral to all of our teaching. It is progressively built up across lesson sequences, with each curriculum area having a vocabulary progression map of non-negotiable technical language to be taught and built upon. It is evident in displays within classroom, with key knowledge displayed upon road maps outside each classroom. Vocabulary is explicitly taught in all subject areas and assessed to ensure that children are retaining key vocabulary. Opportunities are taken within all curriculum areas to use oracy skills to develop understanding and use of vocabulary, and these are mapped into individual subject's medium-term planning. Word Warriors (a bespoke approach based on Word Aware) is used to develop specific vocabulary that can be applied across the school. Where appropriate, vocabulary is pre-taught, to raise the standard of classroom talk when texts containing new vocabulary are introduced.

Across the curriculum, we aim to celebrate diversity. We are always seeking to make sure that our reading resources derive from a broad range of cultures and backgrounds. Within wider curriculum lessons, pupils will study key figures from a wide range of circumstances who have had a significant impact upon their discipline.

As a school we continually ensure that CPD around the curriculum is a priority for our teachers. We seek to enhance teaching skills and strategies to help raise standards across the full breadth of the curriculum. We encourage our staff to be active learners, continuing to support staff in development of subject specific pedagogical content knowledge. Teachers will be given staff meeting time to read, research and reflect around current educational practice. The aim is that all CPD improves our pedagogy; we are all lifelong learners, staff and pupils alike. Our TAs also receive training on how best to support all learners within the classroom. We also ensure that this practice impacts on classroom practice. Strategies used and encouraged are underpinned by research and CPD to ensure staff know why and how an approach works.

Our development cycle is set out at the start of each academic year. Monitoring includes book looks, lesson visits, learning walks, pupil/staff voice surveys and guidance days and monitoring of gaps in learning due to attendance issues. This all feeds into staff development. All monitoring undertaken helps to improve our practice, with the aim of bettering the outcomes for our pupils.

Formative assessment is an integral part of daily lessons and is first and foremost the essence of helping making our pupils make instant progress. This is done through a mixture of high-level questioning, discussion, Oracy activities and written work. A record of work may take a variety of forms over time, such as books, photographs, videos and voice notes. Pupils will be encouraged to present their understanding in a variety of formats, as we value learning above 'task completion'. As Mary Myatt says, 'Completion of a task and understanding are not the same thing, but they are often confused' [13]

Our verbal feedback approach allows teachers to unpick misconceptions with the whole class or individual groups. Feedback is planned to be provided in a timely manner and be acted upon by the children. Pre-teach or post-teach sessions are planned by the class teacher and delivered regularly to provide specific feedback to all groups. TA support is fluid among all learners. Teachers also praise

[13] Back on Track, M Myatt

and share quality learning with the class. Improvements are modelled with the whole class or targeted groups as required. Our verbal feedback form encourages a more diagnostic approach to groups and individuals and facilitates regular and ongoing target setting. (Ref. Feedback Policy)

We aim for all pupils to access age related content as far as possible We have moved towards a focus on scaffolding and task adaptation rather than relying on pre-defined differentiation, which puts a ceiling on pupils' learning. Fluid scaffolding based on teacher assessment from day to day enables us

to do this. Scaffolding is subtly removed over time to encourage independence. Scaffolding may take the form of using equipment, adult/peer support, vocabulary mats/reference materials, sentence stems or voice recording (amongst other approaches). Where barriers to learning are inhibitive to a child accessing a task, we try to adapt the task to ensure that they are able to move learning forward. Subject specific suggestions are highlighted within each subject policy. Pupil passports highlight specific strategies and adaptations that need to be made for pupils at our school. (Ref. SEND Policy)

Impact

- To enable all of our pupils to make good progress across all areas of the curriculum, from whatever the individual's starting point may have been. We define progress as knowing more and remembering more. It is the widening and deepening of knowledge, skills, understanding and behaviours.
- To provide pupils with the language development that gives them the skills required to grow into independent and confident citizens who can make their voice heard.
- For our pupils to have a mindset that enables them to achieve and become independent self-motivated learners who can take risks.
- For pupils leaving us to be well prepared for the next stage in their lives.
- For pupils to be self-assured, confident in the things that make them unique and in what they have to offer others. For all our pupils to have a healthy attitude towards mental well-being and to know where they can access mental health support if required.
- For all pupils to feel inspired and equipped that they can make a positive difference in their own lives, within society and to the world around them.
- For pupils to develop the critical thinking skills that allow them to analyse the world around them effectively.

Appendix 1

