

WEST PARK ACADEMY

Curriculum and Engagement Policy



“The touchstone of an excellent curriculum is that it instils in children a love of learning for its own sake.”

Sir Jim Rose

Reviewed: November 2022

To be Reviewed: November 2024

West Park Academy, part of Shared Vision Learning Trust an exempt charity limited by guarantee in England and Wales (Registered no: 7659444) whose registered office is at Alderman Leach Drive, Darlington, Co Durham DL2 2GF

Vision

At West Park Academy we aim to inspire a life-long love of learning where children are valued for their individuality and realise their full potential within a positive enriched learning environment. Curiosity, flexibility of thought and risk taking are at the heart of everything we do.

We have a curriculum that responds to children's individual needs and questions about the world around them. Through meaningful enquiry we seek to promote resilience, independence and a sense of purpose.

We believe that good teamwork and supportive partnerships within the Academy and across the wider community leads to effective learning and high standards. Our children are responsible citizens, aware of and active within the local and global community.

Intent

At West Park Academy we are passionate about developing children as effective, life-long learners, fully equipped to deal with the challenges of the future and flourish. Our curriculum has been designed to instil in our children a love of learning through developing the confidence to question, the understanding to apply and the self-belief to thrive; providing a range of opportunities to participate and excel within and beyond the school day. The Academy's focus on curriculum development is always designed to ensure coverage and progression.

Our Curriculum design aims to develop children's understanding of who we are, where we come from and who we aspire to be. The children's own community, its heritage and real life experiences are frequently used as a starting point for engaging interest.

Who - knowledge of self, strengths/ areas to develop, positive learning habits, confidence

Where - Darlington, North East of England, Who has shaped it? How has it shaped the world?

High Aspirations - What can I do to shape the world? What can I achieve?

Dispositions

Alongside our curriculum content sit our dispositions. These are shared with the children and developed throughout the curriculum; through celebration they are what we reward and value. We believe that the more children understand how a 'good learner' behaves, the more they will be able to develop this behaviour for themselves. We know that as the world is changing so rapidly, children have to be able to respond confidently and creatively towards it. In order to do this, they need to have acquired the right dispositions towards their learning.

To be curious - I ask questions to find things out and to explore ideas so I understand things more deeply. I want to learn more about the world around me. I am motivated to learn.

To try new things I play with ideas and look at things differently even when I don't quite know where my thoughts are leading. I am always willing to give it a go even when I am not completely sure as to what to do or what will happen. The most important thing is just getting started.

To work hard – I know that to be able to achieve my full potential at school I need to apply myself to my learning and work hard. Hard work ALWAYS accomplishes something. It might be you learn something. It might be you build something. It might be you change something. But hard work always gets results.

To understand others I am part of a whole learning community and I know that I can often learn more with others. I also know when it is good to take time to think and work alone. I work productively with a whole range of people from different social and cultural backgrounds.

To think hard 'I am an independent thinker who can select the most appropriate tools and strategies to solve problems. To get to this point two things must happen. I have a range of knowledge of thinking tools and techniques. I am given the opportunity to choose, try out, modify, fail and succeed. Thinking and finding answers to problems is fun!

To never give up I reflect on my learning and make sure I always follow the next best steps to improve. I know that I should always challenge myself because that is when I learn. I know I can learn from my mistakes. I try new strategies. I know how and when to get help from others. I will keep going until I've done my best. I am able to 'hang in' with learning even though for a while I may feel confused and even anxious.

Implementation

We aim to achieve the above through an enquiry based approach to learning, where learning experiences stimulate and provoke questions to be answered.

Thematic approach –

- Subjects taught through a cross curricular approach linked around a topic led question

Enquiry based –

- Each thematic unit starts with a question that stimulates further questions. Children follow lines of enquiry that appeal to them and through the structure of expert direction and teaching enables them to experience deep and meaningful learning opportunities

Learning Pit / Mastery –

- Expectation that learning is hard and children should be challenged to think hard. They need to be able to explain their thinking, to reason so that they have a deeper understanding of a concept.

At West Park we use the TEEP pedagogical model to ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning. (See Teaching and Learning at West Park)



Our definition of the curriculum is all the activities that we plan, organise and deliver in order to facilitate the development of our pupils, their learning, their personal growth and an understanding of British Values. Alongside the formal requirements of the National Curriculum, PSHCE, and RE, we offer a range of experiences to enhance and enrich learning and development. This includes our pledge to children to offer 11 additional experiences before they are 11 which are intended to support and develop the attitudes of the vision (see Appendix A). Also anti bullying and e-safety focus days, enterprise week, important days within our local and national calendar such as harvest festival, Remembrance Day and St George's Day. This is not an exhaustive list but a flavour of what we value.

Progression

Each teacher is responsible for assessing children's current knowledge and understanding of each subject at the end of the theme and use this to ensure that there is progression over the year, between year groups and across key stages. (See Assessment Policy)

Out of Class Work and Homework

(See Homework Policy)

Visits and visitors

Opportunities to extend the learning beyond the classroom are exploited, the purpose is to enrich the curriculum and make the subject relevant for our learners. They also focus on our locality and community to develop aspiration, stimulate curiosity and develop knowledge to ask meaningful questions. We therefore ensure that themes start with an experience that immerses the learner in the theme.

School and Class Organisation

Access and Inclusion

The curriculum provides relevant and challenging learning to all children. It sets suitable learning challenges, responds to pupils' diverse learning needs and overcomes barriers to learning for individuals and groups. When planning, teachers set high expectations and provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve. Teachers are aware that pupils bring to school different experiences, interests and strengths, which influence the way that they learn. Teachers plan approaches to enable all pupils to engage in the learning fully and effectively.

For this to happen teachers should take specific action to respond to pupils' diverse needs by:

- Creating effective learning environments
- Securing children's motivation and concentration
- Providing equality of opportunity through teaching approaches and use of support
- Using appropriate and accurate assessment approaches
- Setting targets for learning that impact positively on children's rates of progress

Planning

We ensure we meet the statutory requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum but also that we continue to offer a curriculum that is broad and balanced with a clear progression of key skills allowing our children the opportunities to apply these skills. A cross curricular approach groups themes from across subjects around an enquiry question.

Long term Planning

Our theme titles are collated into a big picture and saved as long term planning. This details the enquiries for each year group for each half term and all of the longitudinal learning (learning that is returned to over the year).

Yearly Overview

These documents detail all of the programmes of study for Science and foundation subjects and link them to the themes to be covered. For each year group there is a subject-by-subject overview of the statutory PoS for that year group as given in the national curriculum. Learning objectives are often general rather than specific, and can be repeated across a 2 year phase (KS1, LKS2 and UKS2).

Medium Term Planning

This document links the PoS to the line of enquiry, the learning experiences and intended pupil outcomes including English and Maths (where links to the theme have been made). Key English texts are also detailed as well as trips and visitors. PSHCE, Computing, RE and PE are also included in this document.

Short Term Planning

Short term planning follows the TEEP planning cycle. It details the layered learning which we see as vital for ensuring deeper learning as well as:

- Prepare for learning
- Share learning outcomes
- Presenting new information
- Construct meaning
- Apply to demonstrate
- Reviews throughout

Impact

We assess the difference our curriculum is making to:

- Attainment and progress in core subjects
- Knowledge and skills in foundation subjects
- Decision making
- Physical Health
- Attitudes to learning
- Mental Health
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Positive impact within the local community

These are measured in a variety of ways by the SLT and fed back through the SEF and into the SIDP.

Individual teachers are responsible for **Assessment and record keeping** for their class.

Every lesson must have a clear progressive learning pathway (taken from Bloom's taxonomy) which is shared with children through the layered learning. Children must be able to assess their own progress through a lesson and over a unit by referring to this and teachers should ensure that all children receive feedback that is explicitly linked to layered learning, effort and achievement.

Children must know and be able to articulate where they are in their understanding and learning, and what for them are the next steps.

Ongoing assessment is the expectation in every classroom, within each lesson and across a unit of work. At the end of each unit and within each subject, teachers assess children's understanding. This information is gathered by observing children work in a 'hands on' way, questioning and marking written work as well as low stakes quizzes and some more formal assessment systems.

Reporting to parents

An Enquiry Grid is available for parents each half term. This details the enquiry question and the intended learning linked to relevant subject areas, as well as providing information and activities for parents to provide support at home. Parents are informed of their child's progress throughout the year. They are consulted at parents' evening each term and receive a termly interim report as well as a detailed annual report at the end of the summer term.

Resources

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that they have the appropriate resources and equipment required to teach the theme and responsibility for ensuring that they are looked after and not wasted. If not already in school, these need to be ordered following the Academy's financial procedures. Resources are stimulating, enhance the learning and appropriate to allow the child to demonstrate their learning and skill to a high degree. For each enquiry, teachers will prepare a bespoke knowledge organiser detailing the key facts, information and skills needed to engage in the question.

Monitoring and evaluating

Each term subject leaders complete a work scrutiny of learning covered in books, portfolios of group work and photographs, along with discussions with children to find out their attitudes towards the subject and the findings are fed back to staff. Moderation is also carried out in meetings to ensure that judgments made are accurate. Each year all subject leaders prepare an evaluative report for the SLT and Trustees about standards in their subject and this then feeds in to their subject action plan.

CPD (see CPD policy)

Monitoring of provision, observations of lessons, progress of children and PM reviews are all used to make decisions about where to target CPD. CPD needs to be linked to a sound understanding of pedagogy, effective teaching approaches and the school vision. It is the responsibility of the SLT and the TLRs (with responsibility for curriculum) to ensure that they keep up to date with developments in education and ensure staff are developed to reflect the ethos of the school and best practice.

Management of Curriculum

Role of the Curriculum Leader

- Ensure consistency of approach, coverage and levels of engagement
- Monitor standards and feedback to Trustees and SLT
- Support colleagues in planning, developing teaching approaches and CPD
- Monitor progress in children's knowledge, understanding and personal development
- Ensure that teachers are following school policy and guidelines linked to the curriculum
- Keep up-to-date with developments in education and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate
- Speak with stakeholders regularly to gain an insight into their perception and enjoyment of the curriculum and standards at West Park Academy and use this information to help improve teaching and learning
- To work alongside subject leaders to ensure that the curriculum at West Park Academy fulfils its aims as set out in this document.

Policy Reviewed: November 2022

Curriculum Leader: Emma Farrow / Louise Kenshole

APPENDIX A

Eleven before Eleven

Goal	Disposition	Year Group
Climb a Hill	Push yourself, aim high	FS & Y6
Plant it, grow it, Eat it	Try new things	Y1 & Y2
Visit 5 places of Worship including Durham Cathedral	Understand others	KS1 -2
Sleep under the stars	Try new things, push yourself	Y5
Bike Ride	Push yourself, don't give up	Y6
Follow the journey of a river	Push yourself, be curious	All yr groups
Den building in the woods	Try new things, don't give up	Y4
Make your money grow	Aim High, Think Hard	Y6
Build a World Record Sandcastle	Aim High	Y3
Perform on a Stage	Aim High	Y5
Make a difference to your community – litter pick, charity event + 1 other	Understand others	All

APPENDIX B

Teaching and Learning at West Park

At West Park Academy we inspire a life-long love of learning where children are valued for their individuality and realise their full potential within a positive enriched learning environment. Curiosity, flexibility of thought and risk taking are at the heart of everything we do. We aim to rise above the ordinary by developing a creative curriculum that responds to children's individual needs and interests. (West Park Academy Vision)

Our TEEP Journey

In 2017 the Academy made a commitment to making TEEP the driver for whole school improvement. This began with whole school Level 1 training, leading to a group of 4 teachers moving on to level 2 training and 1 member of staff completing level 3 training. This ensured we have a staff who were all ready to either; begin, develop or support the school's TEEP journey. 18 months on TEEP is now at the core of how we, at West Park, structure and develop effective learning. It is a sustainable model based on deep learning, effective pedagogy and a relentless focus on teaching and learning.

What is TEEP?

TEEP is a whole school framework and training model with learning, collaboration, and evidence of what works at its core. TEEP introduces a common language of learning across the whole school, building on teachers' existing expertise to help reimagine pedagogical practice, develop effective learner behaviours, and achieve consistent, effective teaching.



The TEEP Lesson Cycle enables teachers to understand the phases of learning within a lesson, or a series of lessons, putting the student at the heart of the planning process: what and how are they going to learn as opposed to what am I going to teach? It leads to relevant, purposeful and stimulating lessons.

Impact on Children

As a result of TEEP children are much more active and engaged in their learning. Using TEEP has enabled classrooms to become a more reciprocal learning space – we are all learners together trying to work things out. Children don't see the teacher as the person who 'imparts knowledge'. As a result the children are becoming more independent learners who are more resilient and articulate. They understand the skills needed to be able to work effectively in a group and take responsibility for a role and their own learning. They can talk about what makes their work good and the skills they have used to achieve this. They are researchers and decision makers who question and pursue their own lines of enquiry. They are confident using a variety of reflection tools. TEEP also allows for opportunities for higher ability to think deeper through open ended tasks.

Impact on Teachers

All teachers now have a common language when discussing learning, lesson planning follows a consistent format which reflects the stages of the TEEP lesson planning cycle. We have further developed cross curricular links through carefully thought out apply to demonstrate tasks. Teachers at all stages of their careers have said that it has reinvigorated their learning. Teachers are given regular opportunities to reflect on their practice and are involved in an ongoing cycle of professional development which is based on sound pedagogical research.

Sustainability

As a school we are continuously reflecting on own practice and have a commitment to ongoing professional development to continue to develop TEEP. All our weekly staff training incorporates the TEEP model. We hold regular three weekly TEEP staff meetings with a focus such as revisiting learning behaviours, TEEP peeps and using De Bono's hats. We have a TEEP noticeboard with examples of work and people who can support others in areas of TEEP. We have shared the TEEP cycle with parents and children. As an academy, we want a consistent approach to our teaching, we want to be self-sustaining and able to train and refresh our staff to ensure that we continue to develop the common language for learning.