



CURRICULUM POLICY

RATIONALE

- **Social experiences** – children at Firs Hill often come from large families and this impacts on domestic organisation, offers limited quiet time and opportunities for focus.
- **Limited opportunities for being outside, “messy activities”**- some families, across all ethnic groups, are wary of getting dirty because this impacts on washing bills.
- **Content driven National Curriculum** - does not encourage pupils to become independent, self-managing learners.
- **Cultural context of many of our children** - there is little emphasis on learning through play and discovery within family settings. Creative play e.g. lego, play dough, painting are not features of home learning as noted by staff during home visits.
- **Lack of physical exercise** – Many children are never taken to the park leading to lack of concentration, surplus energy in school
- **21st Century** – Need to prepare our children for employment and life by supporting their development as self-initiated learners

We successfully secured funding from Creative Partnerships 2008-11 to support our curriculum development from using QCA units to fit the key theme of the half term, or term concentrating blocks in specific curriculum areas and making meaningful links.

After 3 years working with artists, teachers and researchers the curriculum was redesigned and agreed as follows:-

Enquiry Based learning curriculum map was drawn up using a manageable number of relevant subjects. The framework specifies that teachers should work with pupils to create a final product to celebrate the learning within each enquiry topic. The framework should offer a menu of options, allowing some freedom of choice e.g. a showcase for parents, a DVD, a performance, a display of learning journals.

The structured skills framework incorporated an enquiry approach and ensured that themes are not repeated in other year groups.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Pupils become independent self-managing learners
- Pupils become problem solvers.
- Prepare our pupils for employment and life by supporting their development as self-initiated

KEY SKILLS TO BE TAUGHT

- Problem solving
- Social skills
- Managing feelings
- Evaluation
- Motivation
- Self-awareness
- Apply knowledge
- Creativity
- Empathy

ACHIEVE THIS BY

- Planning for co-construction
- Planning for relevance
- Planning spaces for learning
- Planning for experiences

What does this mean in practice?

Planning via co-construction

Pupils will co-construct their new learning with teachers through carefully planned pre-learning activities. These activities will provide opportunities for pupils to share existing knowledge and skills, providing the platform for them to voice what they would like to learn about linked to the Key Enquiry Question for each topic.

The pre-learning and co-construction activities should take place at an appropriate time during the preceding term. This will provide teachers the time and opportunity to plan and resource effectively questions within topics to meet the interests of pupils, identify skills to be taught and set appropriate challenge. Parents can then be informed at the beginning of the topic so they can contribute to the learning at home

“Greater motivation and achievement follow when children have a collaborative role in the planning process”

Stages:

1. Find out what they already know/can do
2. What they want to find out/know/be able to do
3. Activity and outcome planning – link with subject and transferrable skills

Ways to find out prior knowledge: Must be visual/active

WOW! – Inspire the children – start the topic with a bang!

- Immersion first – A half day experience of the topic to provide children with initial ideas
- An educational visit in the first week
- Books, posters, artefacts on each table for the children to explore
- An artist, guest speaker

Break down the theme

When given the Victorians the children struggle, when given:

- Inventions
- Queen Victoria
- The industrial revolution

It becomes much easier to share what you know.

Explore materials

Put out equipment and let children ‘play’. Excellent for science topics e.g.

Electrical equipment:

If they can already make a basic circuit – move on!

Magnetism:

Do they already have some key language?

Start with application

Making puppets

Give the children some equipment. Can you make a puppet?

See what skills they have, teach the remaining skills and then have another go!

Other ideas

- Present a problem
- Show children the skills you will cover and use thumbs up/down
- Pictures with incorrect labels/captions. Do you agree or disagree?
- Provide children with a skills list – how would you like to learn each skill?

Skills planning: an example

Key skill	What do you want to learn?	How do you want to learn it?
To compare	Spices Sport	Cooking and tasting Indian food Playing English and Indian sports
To empathise	Poor children lifestyle	Acting and writing a diary Interviews and debates
To use different sources of information	Places Religion	Watch video clips of different places. Using internet to research and make things to do with festivals

Visual Interactive Display

Children's questions and planning needs to be displayed on the walls. As their knowledge grows, the display should be added to and developed by the children showing when new learning takes place. Photos of the process will be selected to capture moments of active co-construction.

2 PLANNING FOR RELEVANCE

- Ensure a range of practical, creative and analytical activities for each child
- Build emotionally significant links to the life of each child, engaging all the senses and using tools and objects to support and promote thinking.
- Need to keep the enquiry question simple & in everyone's vision on display.
- Make specific links with the everyday lives of the children in school
- Make links with previous learning and activities
- Make links to future learning
- Ensure that the topics and Enquiry Questions are revisited every year and adapted according to relevance.
e.g 'Who are you, Barak Obama?' became 'Where do you come from, Usain Bolt?' and a mini topic on the Olympics was taught in 2012 to capitalise on London 2012.
- Ensure opportunities for writing across the curriculum with a focus on literacy objectives being applied in a given context. e.g. newspaper report about Caesar's assassination. Instruction writing – how to make steel letters home from the war from Mary Seacole.

3 PLANNING FOR SPACES FOR LEARNING

The school environment is crucial in supporting the enquiry approach and setting the culture of challenge. Tasks, activities and displays may include a combination of, for example:

- Maths fact of the week
- Question of the week
- Interesting fact of the week
- Posters or pictures with enquiry questions
- Question space for pupils to add post it notes related to current topics
- Making thinking the focus for displays in the classrooms and around school
- Working wall
- Read ,Write Inc (key vocabulary)
- Calculation
- Maths Makes Sense

Children are given the opportunity to design their classroom and make it their own during transition week the year before, e.g a haunted house, superheroes.

Opportunities for outdoor learning continue to be developed with the building of an outdoor classroom (June 2012) and the development of the outdoor provision for F2 and Y1 in KS1 playground. Y2, Y5 – Y6 have the opportunity to attend residential.

4 PLANNING FOR EXPERIENCES

Developmentally appropriate progression in skills, knowledge and understanding using subject specific skills.

- Give time for initial play with materials to encourage creativity and problem solving in teams to develop social skills.
- Adults model problem solving / creative thinking
- Teacher openness to the children’s ideas (sometimes expressed informally through chat)
- Work with others through group investigations, games, model building, and musical improvisations.
- Provide rich learning experiences through provocations, role plays, imaginative explorations, storytellers and artists working in school
- Staff will demonstrate an ability to stand back and ask open questions, listen and allow pupils to lead the learning within the Enquiry based Curriculum.
- Visits – out of school

Some possible questioning methods

- What do you want to find out or understand better through your Enquiry?
- Expand on the thinking behind your area of enquiry
- Asking key questions using the five templates for effective questions

1 A range of questions
2 A statement
3 Right and wrong
4 Starting from the answer or end
5. An opposing standpoint

- The problems that children typically come up against could be noted and taken account of when planning (without removing the element of discovery for the children).
- Scaffolding the children’s learning and increasing their reflective vocabulary

USE OF TASC



5 PLANNING FOR SUPPORTIVE ASSESSMENT AND REFLECTION

- The level of challenge could be increased, both intellectually and artistically, focusing on quality rather than quantity, e.g. setting the children the task of taking a creative piece through two or more prototypes before the final version, challenging them to incorporate refinement each time.

- Parents' showcases could include both experiential activities and an explanation of what the children have been learning and why – and how they can take it forward at home
- List what they have learnt
- List what they have enjoyed
- ORIA for the purposes of private reflection, using the following format
 - Observation: "I saw..." "I noticed..." "I heard..."
 - Reflection: "It made me think..." "I wondered..." "It seemed..."
 - Interpretation: "I discovered...", "I liked...", "I realised..."
 - Action: "This makes me want to...", "Because of this I am going to".
- However, for debriefing as a team, it could indeed be useful to rephrase these as questions, e.g.
 - What did you notice?
 - How did you feel about that?
 - What did it make you wonder?
 - What are you going to do next?
- Children's peer assessment question
 - What went well? Why do you think it went well?
 - What did you enjoy most - why?
 - Whose work communicated best – why?
 - What did you....

How will we know we have achieved our aims?

- By the end of KS2 pupils will have acquired the vocabulary to describe develop and extend their own process of problem solving showing the above qualities at a level appropriate for their age.
- Demonstrate an Ability to use skills across the curriculum
- Enthusiasm for learning and independence.