



PART OF THE THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST



Children first – Challenge – Aspire - Achieve

CURRICULUM POLICY

Aim

At The Gordon Children's Academy we aim to bring learning to life by providing high quality teaching and inspirational learning activities which link to all areas of the curriculum. 'Cornerstones' is the vehicle that supports this approach, which is used to develop links between all areas of the children's learning. Using the Cornerstones half term projects we want children to engage, develop, innovate and express their ideas through a range of activities.

What is the Cornerstones Curriculum?

The Cornerstones Curriculum is a creative and thematic approach to learning that is mapped to the new 2014 Primary National Curriculum to ensure comprehensive coverage of national expectations. Our new curriculum will be delivered through Imaginative Learning Projects (ILPs) which will provide a rich menu of exciting and motivating learning activities that make creative links between all aspects of our children's learning.

We believe children learn better when they are encouraged to use their imagination and apply their learning to engaging contexts. Our new curriculum will provide lots of learning challenges throughout the academic year that will require children to solve problems, apply themselves creatively and express their knowledge and understanding effectively across the curriculum.

Cornerstones also provide a rigorous essential skills framework that outlines the end of year expectations in all subjects. These essential skills are tied to activities and are age related so that staff can track children's progress and identify their individual learning needs.

Every year group will experience 6 Imaginative Learning Projects in a year. Each individual project is split into sections, which see children progress through four stages of learning: Engage, Develop, Innovate and Express.

Engage

At the 'Engage' stage, children:

- gain memorable first-hand experiences, such as going on a visit or inviting a special visitor into school
- enjoy 'WOW' experiences
- get an exciting introduction to a topic or theme
- begin researching and setting enquiry questions
- get lots of opportunities to make observations
- develop spoken language skills
- take part in sensory activities
- have lots of fun to fully 'engage' with their new topic

Develop

At the 'Develop' stage, children:

- improve their knowledge and understanding of the topic.
- develop and practise their new skill
- compose, make, do, build, investigate, explore, write for different purposes and read across the curriculum
- research their own questions and those set by others
- follow new pathways of enquiry based on their interests
- complete homework activities that support their learning

Innovate

At the 'Innovate' stage, children:

- apply skills, knowledge and understanding in real-life contexts
- solve real or imagined problems using everything they've learnt
- get inspired by imaginative and creative opportunities
- revisit anything not fully grasped at the 'Develop' stage



Express

At the 'Express' stage, children:

- become the performers, experts and informers
- share their achievements with parents, classmates and the community
- evaluate finished products and processes
- link what they have learnt to where they started
- celebrate their achievements!

Curriculum

The Creative Curriculum has been organised through a 'topic based' approach which incorporates the key skills set out in the New National Curriculum (2014). The use of Computing is encouraged in all topic areas as a subject in its own right and in both the teaching of the topic and in the opportunities for children's independent learning.

Wherever possible links are made throughout the curriculum to provide the children with an enhanced learning experience. The long term planning is carefully structured to ensure that children learn through a wide range of themes including those that are predominately History, Geography or Science based.

Long term planning is available on the school's website as well as additional material that members of the school community are able to access.

To support the creative curriculum some aspects are taught as discrete skills teaching including:

- **Maths** – These skills are key to developing everyday skills although links can be made to the curriculum through data handling, position, and measurement, especially in Science, Design Technology and Geography.
- **Aspects of English** – Phonics, Guided Reading, Spelling and Handwriting are taught as discrete subjects as they build up basic skills.
- **RE** – we follow the Medway Agreed syllabus
- **PE and Swimming** – delivered by teaching staff and additional specialised staff
- **PSHE** - we use the Jigsaw curriculum recommended by the PSHE association
- **Computing** – We use the Rising Stars materials

Teaching and Learning Style

Teaching staff are encouraged to broaden the experience of the topics for the children through trips, visitors into school and shared experiences of the wider school community, e.g. involvement with parents and school links etc.

Children's' achievements are celebrated regularly through the school newsletters, displays in classrooms and shared corridor areas and in assemblies where children are encouraged to share their knowledge with the rest of the school.

We use a variety of teaching styles:

- Use of Thinking Schools pedagogy to develop learners.
- Open ended probing questions, visual stimuli and talk partners.
- We recognise that children have preferred learning styles, and so make allowances for this in our planning and delivery. (VAK -Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic learners).
- We provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability and learning style of the children. We achieve this in a variety of ways by:
 - setting common, open ended tasks to elicit a variety and depth of response.
 - setting tasks of increasing difficulty, scaffolding where appropriate.
 - grouping children by ability/differentiation.
 - providing practical opportunities for kinaesthetic learners.
 - using visual stimuli to promote interest.

Parental Involvement

Parents are also considered an educator of a child. Therefore they are encouraged to be involved in their child's schooling from the beginning. Half term projects are being introduced to involve parents in their child's learning. Children are encouraged to bring books, souvenirs into school when they link to the projects. Parents with a particular job role linked to the topics will be invited into school to discuss this with the class/year group.

Parents and carers are kept informed of developments, through: school newsletters, celebration assemblies, parents evening and end of year reports.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Ongoing assessment includes: Children's work – exercise books, paper, posters, oral presentations, performances, photographs, videos

- Self-assessment
- Peer assessment
- Questioning and discussion
- Group work activities
- Topic books – Child and teacher assessing LO for each subject (EDM - Emerging, Developing and Mastering)
- Topic books - children's and teacher comments about the project
- Assessment tasks such as quizzes and testing

Equal Opportunities

We aim to give all children, irrespective of age, gender or ethnic origin equal opportunity to make maximum progress. It is expected that all children will be given the opportunity to learn in a creative and encouraging learning environment which encompasses a range of learning and teaching styles. It is hoped that this approach will motivate and support children's learning at all levels including the Gifted and Talented, EAL and children identified with a Special Educational Need (SEN).

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher and Governing Body have overall responsibility for the Creative Curriculum, supported by the Phase Assistant Headteachers.

The Headteacher and subject leaders are responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Creative Curriculum through:

- Formal and informal discussions with staff.
- Monitoring planning to ensure curriculum coverage.
- Carrying out book scrutinies alongside planning to ensure cross-curricular links are optimised.
- Observing learning and teaching to ensure progress is being made within the topics.
- Making changes where necessary.
- Formulating an action plan to move the school forward.

All teaching staff are responsible for the planning and delivery of the curriculum on a day-to-day basis and for making cross-curricular links where appropriate. Staff make amendments to planning in order to optimise learning opportunities when they arise.