

Bilbrook Church of England Middle School

Curriculum Policy

Adopted by Governors: November 2006

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Introduction

The working definition of the concept of the curriculum which underpins this policy is that **the curriculum is the totality of a pupil's experience in school.** This includes:

- The taught curriculum, that is the delivery of discrete subjects and cross-curricular aspects
- Extra-curricular activities
- The 'hidden' curriculum, or the 'culture' of the school, that is the way things are done in the school

Section 1: Vision and aims

The *vision* of the school is **to develop our pupils as life-long learners**. The entire curriculum is therefore organised to this end.

This vision is firmly rooted in the vision and values of education as expressed in the National Curriculum (DfEE 1999):

Education influences and reflects the values of society, and the kind of society we want to be. It is important, therefore, to recognise a broad set of common values and purposes that underpin the school curriculum and the work of schools.

Foremost is a belief in education, at home and at school, as a route to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural physical and mental development, and thus the well-being of the individual. Education is also a route to equality of opportunity for all, a healthy and just democracy, a productive economy, and sustainable development. Education should reflect the enduring values that contribute to these ends. These include valuing ourselves, our families and other relationships, the wider groups to which we belong, the diversity in our society and the environment in which we live. Education should also reaffirm our commitment to the virtues of truth, justice, honesty, trust and a sense of duty.

At the same time, education must enable us to respond positively to the opportunities and challenges of a rapidly changing world in which we live and work. In particular, we need to be prepared to engage as individuals, parents, workers and citizens with economic, social and cultural change, including the continued globalisation of the economy and society, with new work and leisure patterns and with the rapid expansion of communication technologies.

The *aims* of the school are the aims of the *Every Child Matters* agenda:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

The organisation and delivery of the curriculum is driven by these aims.

Section 2: Principles

- The curriculum should enable children to learn, to achieve and to enjoy.
- The curriculum should be relevant to the lives of the children and they should be able to relate to it. They should be able to see the connectivity of learning, and it should prepare them for life.
- The curriculum should fulfil statutory requirements.
- The curriculum should be readily accessible to all children, and should enable all children to achieve appropriately. The focus is on personalised learning, taking account of special learning needs, including issues of gender, ethnicity, special educational needs, gifted and talented pupils, looked-after children, children whose first language is not English, mobility, refugee children, and so on.
- The culture of the school, '*the way we do things here*', is as important as the timetabled school day. It includes what happens to pupils in the corridors, in the playground, in the toilets, in the dining hall, how they are registered, how they are treated by adults and other pupils, and so on.
- The curriculum reflects the special nature of the school as a middle school. This means providing an enriching, formative and supportive environment which enables children at this age to develop a firm foundation of knowledge, skills and aptitudes as they move into the 14 – 19 stage of education.
- The curriculum reflects the special nature of the school as a voluntary controlled church school. This means that Christian values are built into the organisation and delivery of the curriculum, and a high priority is given to strong links between the home, school and parish. There is active involvement of the foundation governors and the local clergy. We are committed to working closely with the first schools and high school in our pyramid to ensure continuity and progression.
- The curriculum supports the education which is happening at home and in other areas of the community.

Section 3: Practice: The taught curriculum (including enrichment enhancement)

Introduction

The taught curriculum is based on the legislation for voluntary controlled schools. It includes:

- I. The National Curriculum subjects
- II. Other statutory requirements
- III. Other areas taught
- IV. Cross-curricular aspects:
 1. spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (national curriculum)
 2. key skills (national curriculum)
 3. thinking skills (national curriculum)
 4. financial capability (national curriculum)
 5. enterprise and entrepreneurial skills (national curriculum)
 6. work-related learning (national curriculum)
 7. education for sustainable development (national curriculum)
 8. learning skills (Building Learning Power)
- V. Curriculum enhancement.

The delivery of all the statutory elements of the taught curriculum is based on national programmes of study and national guidance. National strategies (eg the Primary Strategy; the Secondary Strategy) are also taken into account where appropriate. These elements are all built into the timetabled 5 hours teaching per day, and supported by additional enhancement activities. Classes are largely mixed ability, but setting takes place in maths and English in all year groups, and in science in Years 5 and 6. The following tables set out the percentages allocated to each subject area in a year.

I. The National Curriculum

Subject	Percentage of the curriculum at Key Stage 2	Percentage of the curriculum at Key Stage 3
English (Literacy)	24%	16%
Mathematics (Numeracy)	20%	16%
Science	12%	12%
Design and technology	4%	8%
Information and communication technology	4%	4%
History	4%	6%
Geography	4%	6%
Modern foreign languages (French)	4%	8%
Art and design	4%	4%
Music	4%	4%
Physical education	8%	8%
Citizenship	-	Taught within PSHE

II. Other statutory requirements

Religious Education (following locally agreed syllabus)	4%	4%
Sex education	Taught within PSHE, science and others	Taught within PSHE, science and others

III. Other areas taught

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	4%	4%
Cross-curricular aspects	In every subject	In every subject

IV. *Cross-curricular aspects*

1. *Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (see Appendix 1)*

- Provides pupils with knowledge and insight into values and beliefs and enables them to reflect on their experiences in a way which develops their spiritual awareness and self knowledge
- Teaches the principles which distinguish right from wrong
- Encourages pupils to relate positively to others, take responsibility, participate fully in the community, and develop an understanding of citizenship
- Teaches pupils to appreciate their own cultural tradition and the diversity and richness of other cultures

2. *Key skills*

The key skills help learners to improve their learning and performance in education, work and life. These key skills are embedded in the National Curriculum.

Communication

The key skill of communication includes skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Skills in speaking and listening include the ability to speak effectively for different audiences; to listen, understand and respond appropriately to others; and to participate effectively in group discussion. Skills in reading and writing include the ability to read fluently a range of literacy and non-fiction texts and to reflect critically on what is read; and the ability to write fluently for a range of purposes and audiences, including critical analysis of their own and others' writing. Opportunities for developing this key skill are provided through English in particular and through pupils' use of language across the curriculum.

Application of number

The key skill of application of number includes developing a range of mental calculation skills and the ability to apply them within a variety of contexts. Skills include developing the understanding and use of mathematical language related to numbers and calculations in order to process data, solve increasingly complex problems and explain the reasoning used. Pupils need to be able to apply calculation skills and the understanding of number to problems in other National Curriculum subjects and to real-life situations. Opportunities for developing this key skill are provided explicitly in mathematics, and through pupils' use of number across the curriculum.

Information technology

The key skill of information technology includes the ability to use a range of information sources and ICT tools to find, analyse, interpret, evaluate and present information for a range of purposes. Skills include the ability to make critical and informed judgements about when and how to use ICT for maximum benefit in accessing information, in solving problems or for expressive work. The ability to use ICT information sources includes enquiry and decision-making skills, as well as information-processing and creative thinking skills and the ability to review, modify and evaluate work with ICT. Opportunities for developing the key skill are provided explicitly through the subject of ICT and through pupils' use of ICT across the curriculum.

Working with others

The key skill of working with others includes the ability to contribute to small-group and whole-class discussion, and to work with others to meet a challenge. If pupils are

to work with others they must develop social skills and a growing awareness and understanding of others' needs. All subjects provide opportunities for pupils to cooperate and work effectively with others in formal and informal settings, and to appreciate the experience of others and consider different perspectives, and to benefit from what others think, say and do.

Improving own learning and performance

The key skill of improving own learning and performance involves pupils reflecting on and critically evaluating their work and what they have learnt, and identifying ways to improve their learning and performance. They need to be able to identify the purposes of learning, to reflect on the processes of learning, to assess progress in learning, to identify obstacles or problems in learning and to plan ways to improve learning. All subjects provide opportunities for pupils to review their work and discuss ways to improve their learning.

Problem solving

The key skill of problem solving involves pupils developing the skills and strategies that will help them to solve the problems they face in learning and in life. Problem solving includes the skills of identifying and understanding a problem, planning ways to solve a problem, monitoring progress in tackling a problem and reviewing solutions to problems. All subjects provide pupils with opportunities to respond to the challenge of problems and to plan, test, modify and review the progress needed to achieve particular outcomes.

3. Thinking skills

By using thinking skills pupils can focus on 'knowing how' as well as 'knowing what' – learning how to learn. The following thinking skills complement the key skills and are embedded in the National Curriculum.

Information-processing skills

These enable pupils to locate and collect relevant information, to sort, classify, sequence, compare and contrast, and analyse part/whole relationships.

Reasoning skills

These enable pupils to give reasons for opinions and actions, to draw inferences and make deductions, to use precise language to explain what they think, and to make judgements and decisions informed by reasons or evidence.

Enquiry skills

These enable pupils to ask relevant questions, to pose and define problems, to plan what to do and how to research, to predict outcomes and anticipate consequences, and to test conclusions and improve ideas.

Creative thinking

These enable pupils to generate and extend ideas, to suggest hypotheses, to apply imagination, and to look for alternative innovative outcomes.

Evaluation skills

These enable pupils to evaluate information, to judge the value of what they read, hear and do, to develop criteria for judging the value of their own and others' work or ideas, and to have confidence in their judgements.

4. Financial capability

Financial capability is about making competent decisions in relation to managing money and planning finances for the future. It helps pupils to make independent and

informed decisions about budgeting, spending, saving and investing, using credit, avoiding debt, and obtaining value for money. It helps pupils to understand their own and others' needs and to consider the effects of their decisions on individuals, groups, families and communities and at a national level. Pupils should be able to understand the financial implications of their choices and to leave school prepared to be confident and knowledgeable consumers, aware of their responsibilities and rights. There are opportunities for pupils to develop financial capability within the school curriculum, in particular in their work in mathematics, PSHE and citizenship, as well as through involvement in other school activities such as work with business and the community.

5. Enterprise and entrepreneurial skills

Changing patterns of work mean that many young people will consider self-employment at some point in their working lives. Pupils should therefore develop skills and attitudes that will prepare them for this as a career option. Many aspects of the curriculum at both key stages provide opportunities for developing enterprise and entrepreneurial skills.

Enterprise can be associated with a set of attributes, skills and attitudes that enable people to create and thrive on change. Enterprise education enables pupils to develop confidence, self-reliance and willingness to embrace change. Through participation in mini-enterprises pupils can practise risk management, learning from mistakes and being innovative.

Entrepreneurialism is the creation of wealth through the development of new and small businesses. Opportunities can be provided for pupils to learn about and explore the role of individuals in sustaining and developing the economy and society and to develop the entrepreneurial characteristics of tenacity, independence, innovation, imagination, risk-taking, creativity, intuition and leadership.

6. Work-related learning

The school curriculum provides opportunities for all pupils to prepare for working life by developing basic understanding of the diversity of workplace opportunities and requirements.

Work-related learning results from planned activities that use work as a context for learning or to illustrate aspects of working life. 'Learning through work' such as enterprise activities, can raise standards by using contexts that improve motivation and attainment. 'Learning about work' through, for example, visits to places of work, can improve young people's understanding of themselves and opportunities for work.

7. Education for sustainable development

Education for sustainable development enables pupils to develop the knowledge, skills, understanding and values to participate in decisions about the way we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future. There are opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of sustainable development within the school curriculum, in particular in their work in geography, science, PSHE and citizenship.

8. Learning skills

The school supports the development of lifelong learning skills through the *Building Learning Power* programme. *Building Learning Power* recognises 4 major learning dispositions: **resilience; resourcefulness; reflectiveness; and reciprocity**. The programme aims to develop a range of capacities within these four dispositions, which together help children to develop as lifelong learners.

In summary these capacities are:

Resilience: the emotional aspects of learning (feeling)

- Absorption
- Managing distractions
- Noticing
- Perseverance

Resourcefulness: the cognitive aspects of learning (thinking)

- Questioning
- Making links
- Imagining
- Reasoning
- Capitalising

Reflectiveness: the strategic aspects of learning (managing)

- Planning
- Revising
- Distilling
- Meta-learning

Reciprocity: the social aspects of learning (relating)

- Interdependence
- Collaboration
- Empathy and listening
- Imitation

Developing these skills is done both through discrete units of teaching and through teaching within every subject area in the curriculum.

V Curriculum enhancement

The school is committed to enhancing the delivery of the curriculum through the following means, as and when it is appropriate and possible:

- Homework
- Visits (for instance to Liverpool, Brewood, Cannock Forest, the Holocaust Museum)
- Specialist speakers or groups coming into school (eg history, music)
- Artists in residence
- Residential visit (one week) to Stanley Head in Year 6
- Community and charity events (eg Luncheon Club; international days)

Homework is an important part of learning and is planned as part of the taught curriculum. Homework can:

- improve pupil learning
- encourage research skills
- develop independent learning
- reinforce and extend classwork

It can take many forms, including:

- developing reading skills
- independent research for project work
- practical exercises

further practise of work done in class
recording work to practise oral skills

A schedule is agreed for each year group, with timings which build progressively as the pupils move up through the school. (See Appendix 2 for information about the schedule.) Homework is recorded in homework diaries. It is monitored by the subject teachers, and by the form tutor once a week. Sanctions are applied if children fail to do homework.

Parents are asked to support the school in its homework policy by:
providing their child with a suitable place in which to work
checking that homework is done
signing the diary each week
making contact with the school if there are any problems concerning homework.

Section 4: Practice: Extra-curricular activities

The school is committed to offering a range of extra-curricular activities which offer:

- further opportunities to develop skills, aptitudes and knowledge being delivered through the taught curriculum
- new opportunities to engage in activities and develop skills not offered through the taught curriculum
- opportunities to engage in competitive activities with other schools

Extra-curricular activities are scheduled at the end of the school day, in a 45 minute period. They are normally offered in 6 week units, allowing pupils to sample a range of activities across the school year. All pupils are encouraged to take part in these activities, and the principles of inclusion guide the management of these activities.

Activities across the year cover a range of sports, music, art, drama, technology, ICT, other leisure activities, and include a homework club.

Section 5: Practice: The school culture

The culture of the school, *'the way we do things here'*, is as important as the timetabled school day. The culture of the school is the routine set of behaviours and rules which gives the school its particular feel. It includes what happens to pupils in the corridors, in the playground, in the toilets, in the dining hall, how they are registered, how they are treated by adults and other pupils, and so on. Our commitment in this school is to ensure that the school culture is fully inclusive, taking account of the full range of personal needs of our children. This commitment is covered in a range of other policies (eg discipline, equality of opportunity, anti-bullying, and so on).

Section 6: Practice: Staffing and resources, including the Library

The school is committed to staffing the curriculum with specialist subject teachers wherever possible. Teaching assistants are used to support children with special educational needs, and sometimes they withdraw children to do individual or small-group work. Teaching assistants are also used to cover short term absence of teachers. Technicians are used to support the practical subjects (science, technology, ICT). Good quality resources, including ICT resources, are used to support teaching and learning. Teachers, teaching assistants and technicians are supported in their own development to ensure that the content and delivery of the curriculum is kept up-to-date.

The school is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children. Staff recruitment follows national legislation and guidance, including the guidance on criminal record checking. All staff are trained as appropriate in issues of health and safety and child protection. Where the school operates a visit, national legislation and local guidance is used to ensure the health and safety of the children. There are separate school policies relating to all these issues.

In Key Stage 2, classes are taught as much as possible by class teachers, particularly for the core and humanities subjects. This ensures continuity for pupils while maintaining specialist staffing and facilities as appropriate. In Key Stage 3 a secondary model of delivery is used, and where possible children are taught by specialist subject staff.

The Library

The library supports the curriculum in the following ways:

- It supports the delivery of the national curriculum programme of study for reading, which states that, '*Pupils should encounter an environment in which they are surrounded by books and other reading material presented in an attractive and inviting way.*'
- It provides resources for the curricular needs of all subject areas, to support and enrich activities in the classroom
- It provides resources for the leisure needs of pupils for use both in school and for reading at home
- It helps to engender a love of books and an enthusiasm for reading for pleasure
- It helps to develop information handling skills
- It helps to develop skills of independent learning
- It provides an area with the appropriate atmosphere for individual study or reading
- It provides help for the individual needs of pupils and staff
- It provides a central collection which makes maximum use of resources, avoids unnecessary duplication and creates awareness of the inter-relatedness of disciplines

The school is committed to providing the necessary resources to develop the full potential of the library. This includes funding for staffing, books and for further development. The school works closely with the local authority's Schools Library Service, and there are links with Codsall Library.

The school's Head of English has over-all responsibility for the library. The day-to-day operation of the library is the responsibility of the school librarian.

Section 7: Practice: Responsibilities

<i>School Governors:</i>	Making decisions about the whole-school curriculum and staffing the curriculum; monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the delivery of the curriculum against the principles as set out in this policy.
<i>Headteacher:</i>	Leading curriculum design and development; managing the effective delivery of the curriculum; monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the delivery of the curriculum and reporting to governors.
<i>Deputy Headteacher</i>	Timetabling
<i>Leadership Team</i>	Supporting the headteacher in their role
<i>Key Stage 2 and 3 Co-ordinators:</i>	Ensuring the effective delivery of the curriculum and assessment at the relevant key stages; ensuring the appropriate progress of pupils within the key stage; managing the delivery of key stage strategies; reporting to the headteacher and governors; leading curriculum development within the key stage.
<i>Subject leaders:</i>	The professional leadership and management of the subject, including planning and delivery of the subject. Ensuring high quality teaching, effective use of resources and the highest standards of learning and achievement for all pupils.
<i>Teachers:</i>	Delivering the schemes of work through high quality teaching, effective use of resources, and securing the highest standards of learning and achievement for the pupils.

Appendix 1
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Statement of general principles

- 1 The school is committed to providing for and promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.
- 2 As a voluntary controlled church school, the spiritual and moral curriculum has a special place in the school. These aspects feature prominently in the delivery of RE, in collective worship, and in the school culture.
- 3 The provision is delivered through the school curriculum including the timetabled day, enrichment and extra-curricular activities, links with parents, the culture of the school, the example set for pupils by adults in the school, and through collective worship.
- 4 The aims of the provision are:
 - To provide pupils with knowledge and insight into values and beliefs and enable them to reflect on their experiences in a way which develops their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge
 - To teach principles which distinguish right from wrong
 - To encourage pupils to relate positively to others, take responsibility, participate fully in the community, and develop and understanding of citizenship
 - To teach pupils to appreciate their own cultural tradition and the diversity and richness of other cultures
- 5 The responsibility for the delivery of the provision and for its monitoring and evaluation lies with the subject leaders, reporting to the leadership team, the headteacher and governors.

Practice: the spiritual curriculum

Pupils should have the opportunity to:

Beliefs

- Develop personal beliefs, including religious beliefs
- Appreciate that people have individual and shared beliefs on which they base their lives
- Develop an understanding of how beliefs contribute to personal identity

Awe, wonder and mystery

- Be inspired by the natural world, mystery and human achievement

Feelings of transcendence

- Experience feelings which may give rise to belief in the existence of a divine being
- Experience feelings which stimulate the belief that one's inner resources provide the ability to rise above everyday experience

Meaning and purpose

- Ask questions about the meaning of life
- Reflect on the origins of life
- Respond to challenging experiences in life

Self knowledge

- Increase their awareness of their own thoughts, feelings, emotions, responsibilities, and experiences
- Grow in understanding of individual identity
- Develop self respect

Relationships

- Recognise and value the worth of each individual
- Develop a sense of community
- Build relationships with others

Creativity

- Express innermost thoughts
- Exercise imagination
- Experience emotions when encountering beauty, injustice
- Develop the ability to control emotions and use them as a source of growth
-

Practice: the moral curriculum

Pupils should have the opportunity to:

Principles

- Develop concepts of right and wrong
- Consider the connection between principles and moral behaviour
- Develop a set of personal principles which inform their own moral behaviour

Codes

- Investigate the codes and conventions of conduct agreed by society
- Explore the variety of sources of personal morality – beliefs and values of individuals; social, cultural and religious groups

Making judgements

- Question the codes and conventions of society
- Recognise the boundaries of value systems
- Develop the ability to make their own judgements
- Recognise the need to make personal decisions in areas which are considered right by some, wrong by others
- Discover the need to review and re-assess their values, codes and principles in the light of experience

Practice: the social curriculum

Pupils should have the opportunity to:

Community

- Explore the rewards and responsibilities of living in a community
- Become involved in community projects
- Operate in a number of different roles within the community
- Share in times of celebration and sadness
- Acknowledge the importance of others in the community
- Be valued by the community

Responsibility

- Develop leadership skills
- Take responsibility for their own actions
- Be involved in the setting of personal targets
- Act on their own initiative
- Take responsibility for others

Relationships

- Practice the skills of communication
- Work as a group or team
- Experience a variety of classroom/school organisation
- Develop negotiation skills
- Listen to the views of others
- Explore relationships in the wider community

Society

- Investigate the formal structures of society
- Explore the variety of social organisation to be found in the wider community
- Experience the importance of rules which operate for the common good

Practice: the cultural curriculum

Pupils should have the opportunity to:

Knowledge

- Extend their knowledge of their own cultural heritage
- Explore cultures other than their own
- Investigate the links between achievements in different fields or disciplines
- Consider the influence of cultures on each other

Understanding

- Talk about that which is important to them
- Share in what is important to others
- Encourage the development of achievement and interests in themselves and others
- Celebrate achievements by members of the community in whatever sphere

Interest

- Be introduced to a wide range of leisure interests
- Respect and develop interests and accomplishments
- Develop their own creative and aesthetic skills through a variety of media
- Consider the importance of leisure

Experience

- Experience and respond to a variety of cultural traditions
- Develop an appreciation of that which is acknowledged to be cultural achievement

Appendix 2 Homework Schedule

Year 5

Weekly homework in literacy, numeracy, science, geography or history.
In addition music, art, religious education, ICT and technology as appropriate.

Each homework to last approximately 30 minutes.

Year 6

Weekly homework in literacy, numeracy, science, geography or history.
In addition French, music, art, religious education, ICT and technology as appropriate.

Each homework to last approximately 45 minutes.

Year 7

Weekly homework in English, maths, science, French, geography or history.
In addition music, art, religious education, ICT and technology as appropriate.

Each homework to last approximately 45 minutes.

Year 8

Weekly homework in English, maths, science, French, geography or history.
In addition music, art, religious education, ICT and technology as appropriate.

Each homework to last approximately 1 hour.