Curriculum Statement

Intent

At Laceby Acres Academy we believe that learning is a change to long-term memory.

*‘If nothing in the long term memory has been altered, nothing has been learned’: Sweller et al (2011)*

We ensure that our children experience a wide breadth of study based on the National Curriculum.

Our Curriculum is shaped by our Curriculum Drivers, which are: *Enquiry, Possibilities, The Arts and Diversity.*

This have been chosen because of the needs of our children and our local community and also because of our beliefs about a high quality education and our values.

Cultural capital gives our children the vital background knowledge required to allow them to develop into informed and thoughtful members of society, who understand and believe in British Values (Democracy, English Law, Accountability, Individual Liberty, Equality and Tolerance)

Our curriculum has been carefully designed around three main elements: Threshold Concepts, Breadth of Contexts and Milestones for Progress. Threshold concepts shape children’s thinking within each subject of the curriculum. These same concepts are explored in every year group and children gradually increase their understanding of them. The exploration of these threshold concepts will never be complete and children will continue to explore them for as long as they study a subject. The use of threshold concepts results in a ‘less is more’ approach to curriculum design.

Meyer and Land identify five key characteristics of Threshold Concepts:

**Transformative**- once a Threshold Concept is understood it potential effect on learning is to allow a significant shift in the perception of a subject. This could lead to a change in values or attitudes.

**Probably Irreversible** – unlikely to be forgotten

**Integrative** – mastery of a Threshold Concept allows the learner to make connections that were hidden from view

**Possibly bounded** – ‘any conceptual space will have terminal frontiers, bordering with thresholds into new conceptual areas. It might be that such boundedness in certain instances serves the demarcation between disciplinary areas, to define academic territories.’ Meyer and Land (2006)

**Potentially troublesome** – ideas that may conflict with children’s own ideas, they may be tacit among teachers (experts) so we do not explicitly teach them.

High quality children’s literature is also central to our curriculum design. Each term the children experience access to a range of high quality texts and poetry. Teachers all read aloud to the children on a daily basis, giving all children, especially the disadvantaged, the opportunity to access literature, which is beyond their reading ability. This approach ensures that the curriculum remains vibrant, exciting and always challenging.

A final and crucial aspect of our curriculum design is a focus on the development of a child’s vocabulary. The National Curriculum comments on vocabulary development several times:

‘Teachers should develop pupils’ spoken language, reading and writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of teaching of **every** subject.’

‘English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching. For pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum.’

‘Pupils’ acquisition and command of vocabulary are key to their learning and progress across the whole curriculum.’

‘It is particularly important to induce pupils into the language which defines each subject in its own right, such as accurate mathematical and scientific language. ‘

Implementation

‘Implementation – the process of putting a decision or plan into effect.’ (Oxford English Dictionary)

‘Vision without implementation is hallucination.’ (Thomas Edison)

We believe that it does not matter how great an educational idea or intervention is in principle, what really matters is how it looks in the day-to-day work of the people in the school.

Central to our implementation strategy are the concepts drawn from cognitive science in particular metacognition and self regulated learning.

Cognition is seen as the mental process involved in knowing, understanding and learning. By cognitive strategies, we mean skills like memorisation strategies or subject specific strategies, Cognitive strategies are fundamental to acquiring knowledge and completing learning tasks.

Metacognition is about the ways that learners monitor and purposefully direct their learning. By metacognitive strategies we mean strategies we use to monitor or control our cognition.

Motivation is about our willingness to engage our cognitive and metacognitive skills and apply them to learning. .

Cognition, metacognition and motivation all interact together in complex ways.

The EEF carried out research into metacognition and self regulated learning. In order to implement these techniques through the delivery of the curriculum we are implementing the EEF summary of recommendations:

**Teachers should** acquire the professional understanding and skills to develop their pupils’ metacognitive knowledge

**Teachers should** explicitly teach pupils metacognitive strategies, including how to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning knowledge

**Teachers should** model their own thinking to help pupils to develop their metacognitive and cognitive skills

**Teachers should** set an appropriate level of challenge to develop pupils’ self regulation and metacognition (they should take the children into the ‘liminal space’)

**Teachers should** promote and develop metacognitive talk in the classroom

**Teachers should** explicitly teach pupils how to organise and effectively manage their learning independently

**Schools should** support teachers to develop knowledge of these approaches and expect them to be applied appropriately

We see implementation as a process and we plan for it and evaluate it at different stages. We are creating a leadership environment and school climate that is conducive to good implementation. The first step towards the implementation of our curriculum has been to explore. We have investigated many theories about curriculum design and we believe that we now have in place a well-designed curriculum. We are now in the process of developing a clear implementation plan. This is necessary in order for us to prepare staff and resources to deliver our curriculum. We are creating a shared understanding of the implementation process and we are providing appropriate support. We are introducing new skills, knowledge and strategies with our teaching team with explicit, up front CPD. We shall then be trialling how best to deliver our new curriculum. We have developed a flexible and motivating leadership approach during our initial attempts at implementation. We will reinforce initial training in order to commit the skills and learning to the long term memory of staff. Peer to peer collaboration will ensure that all members of staff have the support that they require. We shall also make thoughtful adaptations to our curriculum and to our pedagogical approaches only when the main ingredients are securely understood and implemented.

Finally we need to ensure that we have a plan for sustaining our curriculum and pedagogical approaches. We need to continue to review whether our implementation is fit for purpose and we shall continue to acknowledge, support and reward good implementation practices.

A successful model we follow is to:

Research –Trial – Drip Feed – Small Steps – Re-visit