



The Recovery Curriculum at Monkton Church of England Primary School

Rationale:

At Monkton Church of England Primary School, we recognise that children in our care will have been affected by the time they have not been able to attend school, due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The aim of the academic year 2020-21 is to weave the Recovery Curriculum throughout our curriculum with the aim of:

"Restoring children to their rightful place as a learner, based on the needs of the individual." Prof. Barry Carpenter April 2020

This in turn will enable us to ensure that the children at Monkton are nurtured and are able to flourish as individuals;

In God's Eyes, Everyone is Special

There are 5 losses that the children may have experienced through the pandemic

Loss of routine

Loss of structure

Loss of friendship

Loss of opportunity

Loss of freedom

The consequences of these losses may be; bereavement, anxiety and/or trauma. The overall impact of these, on the mental health of our children, cannot be underestimated.

The Safe Classroom

It is widely known that anxiety can lock the brain - our children will not learn if they are in an anxious state. Therefore, it is important that our classrooms provide a safe base for our children.

We want our children to feel secure after separating from their parent/carers. Many are happy to share the attention of the teacher and other staff. They are content to follow the lead of staff and peers and not always be in control. They can engage in a variety of activities and tolerate the challenge of a new task.

For children who have experienced trauma, the above factors can be extremely difficult. If their early development has been characterised by a lack of, "good enough" care, their brains may be wired for self-preservation. They have arrived at school without many of the protective factors which build resilience - a nurturing and responsive relationship with an adult, consistent routines, co-regulation of emotions - and therefore find the expectations of school much more demanding than their peers.

By helping these children to feel safe and secure, we are encouraging them to engage with us, place their trust in us and take risks with their learning.

The SWAN Framework for Recovery

Right now, more than ever our children are looking to us, the adults in their lives for safety, support, calm and reassurance. They need to know that is going to be ok. The children need to know that they can rebuild strong foundations to thrive and flourish through positive interactions.

'We have the opportunity to do a lot of harm or we can do a lot of good in the current situation.' Pooky Knightsmith - The SWAN Framework.

We can achieve physical and emotional safety by providing the following in our classrooms and school.

S: Safety - this will need to be invested in and restored. We need to plan for this to happen, not assume that it will. Reach out to greet children and families, use the relationships we build to cushion the discomfort of returning back to school after the break.

W: Welcoming - we must recognise that the children will have been based in the community for a long period of time. They may have been isolated and missed extended human connections. We need to listen to what has happened in this time, understand the needs of our pupils and engage them in the transitioning of learning, back within school.

A: All together - all of our students will feel like they have lost time in learning and we must show them how we are addressing these gaps, consulting and co-constructing with our pupils to heal this sense of loss and anxiety. We will be a team around the child coming together to meet the needs of all of our children, creating an inclusive environment with parent carers and professionals.

N: Nurturing - in different environments, our children will have been learning in different ways. It is vital that we make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to our pupils to reskill and rebuild their confidence as learners. By surrounding the child with care, nurture and a framework of support we will keep them safe and give them the foundations from which to rebuild and grow again.

What the recovery Curriculum will look like at Monkton Church of England Primary School?

Belonging

Teachers will use personalised greetings that convey that each pupil is a valued member of the class, which in turn can reduce their heightened defensiveness. This can be as simple as welcoming the child when they arrive at the door and asking about what they got up to the night before or chatting about their favourite TV show or football team. Showing trust in the child; Giving them a specific job or responsibility to carry out can enable them to feel competent. It can also be a predictable part of the day where they can receive praise and positive recognition from school staff and peers.

Predictability

Communicating and referring to a whole-class visual timetable or the use of an individual visual schedule can help the children to anticipate what is happening now and next. Consistent routines are important. We can use verbal or visual countdowns to help the child anticipate a transition and provide extra structure. The latter might involve using song or rhythm for tidy up time or using visual labelling for where to sit on the carpet or where to stand when lining up.

The use of a "First...then..." approach is often recommended for children with Autism, but it can also work in the context of trauma. A child who has frequently been let down or prevented from finishing enjoyable activities may not trust that they will get to do something they enjoy after an initial task. We can say "First we do our maths, then you'll have time with the Lego" and show this visually during times when the child is stressed or anxious. There will always be occasions when the normal routine is disrupted, such as a member of staff being absent or outdoor play being restricted by weather. It's important to make the child aware of these changes

and explain why they have happened with empathy for their feelings and reassurance about what is happening instead.

Organisation

A classroom environment with high levels of organisation can help to reduce stress for children who have experienced adversity. Start with seating arrangements. For children who are hypervigilant and quick to perceive threat or stress, we will ensure that they are sitting in an area where they have clear visibility of the room and can see who comes and goes. Proximity to a supportive adult and positive peer role models should be considered. We will also avoid too frequent changes to seating where possible, as these children thrive on the safety of a consistent vantage point.

We can also minimise organisational demands through increased visual structure. Areas of the classroom should be clearly labelled with key words and/or pictures, so that the children know where to retrieve specific books and equipment. Visual checklists may also be used to help break learning tasks down into smaller steps and give reminders for how to get started to a task (e.g. taking out a pencil, opening their book to a new page, etc).

Regulation

Children with backgrounds of trauma typically find it very hard to regulate their emotions and express them appropriately, due to their lack of experience with a responsive adult who has modelled such skills. Key adults supporting these children will need to regularly label emotions and wonder aloud about how the child may be feeling. It will be important for them to receive non-judgemental acceptance and empathy for the thoughts and feelings behind a behaviour. Stories, puppets and cartoons may be safe ways of discussing and expressing emotions.

We will also provide ways of managing emotions throughout the day. As is common practice, a preventative approach that involves a sensory diet, may be used. For example, the child who is constantly fidgeting or leaving their seat may need scheduled movement breaks which allow for stimulation of the muscles and joints. We should facilitate personalised calming activities for times when emotions escalate. These might include deep breathing exercises, listening to music, rhythmic tapping/drumming, constructing items with Lego, making things with play doh or slime or reading a favourite story. We also have safe spaces identified for the child to go to when they are in a dysregulated state.

Differentiation

Children with a background of trauma and loss can often find it difficult to concentrate and fully engage with learning tasks, due to their brains being flooded with powerful emotions. When they lack the same ability as their peers to cope with stress, we ensure that the curriculum is modified to accommodate their needs and help them to feel safe when not knowing how to complete a task. If a child struggles to remember and retain information, we will provide simpler and repetitive instructions and active demonstration. We will also link new tasks explicitly with previous tasks or real-life experiences to make new learning more familiar and meaningful.

We can help to build trust by incorporating some element of choice and control. For example, the child could choose which part of the task to complete first or which materials to use. Or we may reduce or conceal the amount of information on a worksheet and provide additional time for them to complete written assignments. We understand that blank pages at the beginning of a writing task may be anxiety-provoking - and they may need additional scaffolding through numbered bullet points to sequence their ideas or writing frames and key word lists for structuring their response

Relationships

Nurturing and supportive relationships are the foundation of safety and at the heart of our school. However, we need to consider what kind of proximity is comfortable for each individual. Some may be easily unsettled by too much help. These will benefit from tasks with minimal adult instruction or feedback which is given to a group of peers including the child. Others may find it very hard to tolerate separation from a member of staff. They will need explicit commentaries about their effort and reassurance about how long they are expected to work independently before re-engaging with the adult. We will ensure such reassurances are communicated

through visual timers, transitional objects or post-it note reminders of when you will be back to check on their progress.

We will also consider how to promote effective relationships with peers. Some children who have experienced trauma may feel safer engaging with a member of staff within the context of a group of friends. Others may find it hard to follow the lead of peers and negotiate in group activities. These children may require a clear and specific role to carry out, so that they can interact with peers in a consistent and predictable manner. Adults working with children will need to model pro-social behaviour and how to resolve conflicts with peers. Providing opportunities to talk about or indulge in the child's personal strengths and interests can also foster positive and optimistic interactions. The aim of our Recovery Curriculum is to establish a sense of safety and security by providing experiences which may have been lacking or inadequate during the pandemic.

For lots of children settling back into school will be successful and not take any emotional toll - in fact lots of children will feel a positive effect from being back in school. In this instance it is important to ensure we address any academic gaps to ensure they are back on track by the end of the year. In some cases, children will be emotionally challenged by their return to school and the Recovery Curriculum at Monkton recognises that these support mechanisms can be put in place to ensure our pupils are in the right place emotionally for catching up with their learning as needed.

What impact will the Recovery Curriculum at Monkton have on academic achievement?

It is expected that the consequences of the pandemic will be far reaching—for all children, but particularly for those from socially disadvantaged families. However, there will have been disparities in engagement, across all groups of children at Monkton, which in turn will have an impact on children's educational attainment.

To enable us to 'restore our children to their rightful place as learners' different tiers of support will be required.

Universal Support-Provision that is applicable and appropriate to all the children in school
Focused Support-Additional measures for groups of children that can be delivered through class provision and smaller intervention groups
Targeted Support-Specific support for individual children

Underpinning any additional support is high quality teaching, which is expected of all the teaching staff.

To ensure our teachers are in a position to deliver the high standards of teaching, it is fundamental that they feel supported and prepared for the adjustments to organisational and logistical aspects of school life. Ensuring teachers have training and support to adjust to these changes will have a positive impact on the quality of teaching, as all pupils return to school. It is essential that staff workload is manageable, to enable the teaching to be effective in reducing the gaps that have arisen due to pupils' varying levels of engagement, during lockdown.

We will aim to provide opportunities for professional development that will support curriculum planning and the School Plan 2020-21. It is important that part of this CPD is focused on the effective use of technology for communication and support, as we are living in a world where face to face contact is not permissible.

Curriculum Support for pupils will present itself in tiers. To identify the tier of support that will be needed assessments will be carried out, which will enable teachers to identify areas where pupils are likely to require additional support or creating opportunities for teachers to share information about pupils' strengths and areas for development with colleagues. This may align with our Pupil Premium priorities.

Tier 1-Universal Support

Setting aside time to enable teachers to assess pupils' wellbeing and learning needs is likely to make it easier for teachers and other school staff to identify the need for, and provide effective support. Subject-specific assessments will be used to identify particular areas where pupils have forgotten or misunderstood key concepts, to ensure that new material being covered builds on secure foundations. This will also provide pupils with high-quality feedback on their own learning.

Tier 2- Focused Support

Effective intervention following assessment, will be used to ensure that support is well-targeted and to monitor pupil progress. Standardised assessments in literacy or numeracy will be used to identify pupils who would benefit from additional catch-up support which may be delivered one to one or in small groups.

A particular focus for interventions will be on literacy and numeracy, due to the extensive evidence showing the long-term negative impact of beginning secondary school without secure literacy skills. Research by the EEF shows that 'Programmes are likely to have the greatest impact where they meet a specific need, such as oral language skills or aspects of reading, include regular sessions maintained over a sustained period and are carefully timetabled to enable consistent delivery'.

Tier 3- Targeted Support

Other Interventions might focus on different aspects of learning, such as behaviour or pupils' social and emotional needs, or focus on particular groups of pupils with identified special educational needs or disabilities. This may require the intervention of External Agencies.

Both Tier 2 and Tier 3 support for pupils will be evidenced and their impact evaluated, on Year Group provision Maps.

Acknowledged

Barry Carpenter - The Recovery Curriculum

Pooky Knightsmith - Supporting a safe and successful return to school using the SWAN Framework