

THE RESEARCH & THINKING BEHIND
THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR
**‘DINNER PARTY
CURRICULUM’**

THINKING ABOUT CULTURAL CAPITAL...



WHAT IS MEANT BY CULTURAL CAPITAL?

- The phrase was first made notable by French writer and thinker Pierre Bourdieu in the 1970s, to refer to the accumulated social and cultural knowledge that can help a person make progress in the world! There are also strong sociological connections to class and family, not just in education.

WHAT DOES OFSTED MEAN BY CULTURAL CAPITAL?

- Cultural Capital itself is defined in the Ofsted Framework as:
- ‘It is the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.’
- ‘pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds generally receive less exposure to ideas that are likely to enable them to accrue cultural capital’

Ofsted School Inspection Handbook 2019

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF CULTURAL CAPITAL?

- Cultural capital has to be considered in domain-specific terms, so think of it as the basic facts behind every concept – we need the facts to be able to critically evaluate and solve any problems. For example, if I teach a poem I need students to know something about the poet, the time the poem is set and any underlying motifs, themes or allusions. Cultural Capital and context have many crossovers.

-
- In its widest scope we can argue that Cultural Capital is that knowledge and those skills we need to enable us to be able to understand the world just that little bit better.
 - In a modern sense we can argue that the concept of Cultural Capital is embodied in someone who knows a lot about a wide range of topics (culture) and is happy to critically evaluate and discuss them.
 - They use their knowledge and experience to deploy appropriate cultural skills at appropriate cultural times, depending on the audience and the need.
 - If anything, it could be argued that the Cultural Capital becomes the spine from which the ribs of the curriculum spread – it holds it together.

-
- Much of the acquisition of cultural capital is also social – “learning is more than knowing what to do; it also involves knowing how to do it” (Zimmerman, 1983) and this was considered when we devised our curriculum.
 - We considered how we use extra-curricular opportunities and pastoral work to enhance our children’s knowledge base, understanding that “we deprive our students of crucially important information if our curriculum fails to provide also the extensive information that literate people in our culture share“.
 - Hirsch refers to being culturally literate as having the “basic information needed to thrive“.

-
- Bourdieu defined cultural capital as ‘familiarity with the legitimate culture within a society’; what we might call ‘high culture’. He saw families passing on cultural capital to their children by introducing them to dance and music, taking them to theatres, galleries and historic sites, and by talking about literature and art over the dinner table.
 - We decided that this is what we wanted from our curriculum, and the Roseberry ‘Dinner Party Curriculum’ idea was born!

-
- ‘Cultural capital’ in this new sense is embodied by an individual who is knowledgeable about a wide range of culture and is comfortable discussing its value and merits. It is characterised by the experience and skill to be able to deploy the appropriate knowledge in any given situation: a job interview, a conversation with a neighbour, building a work network and so on.

WHAT DID WE CONSIDER?

- When devising our curriculum, we thought about how (or, indeed, whether) our curriculum offered opportunities for cultural capital:
- What did we do currently?
- Did our curriculum offer enough scope for children to experience a range of opportunities?
- Were these enrichment / cultural capital experiences planned for, ad hoc or purely accidental?

THE WAY FORWARD...

In planning our Dinner Party Curriculum, we considered:

- Opportunities we wanted our children to have
- What children and adults felt the most important things a child leaving primary should:
Know - Be able to do - Have experience of
- Contacts we had / people we know who may provide opportunities (voluntary or paid)
- Splitting provision into EYFS/KSI, KS2
- Map out provision across the academic year and linking provision to our rolling two year curriculum cycle

REVIEWING OUR PLAN

- In reviewing our plan, we considered the following:
- Was our plan clear, robust and manageable? Yes!
- Did the plan include a range of high quality cultural capital opportunities throughout a child's time at Roseberry? Yes!
- Was the plan equally weighted? Yes!
- Did it give our children a unique offer? Yes!
- Were we excited by it? Absolutely!
- When would the plan begin? September 2022