



Abbeywood First School Rationale for curriculum design

At Abbeywood First School, our aim is to improve the life chances of all our pupils through a broad and balanced academic curriculum. Our motivation is to develop confident and creative young people who can thrive in their future learning and in a changing world. Our curriculum vision is inclusive, well -designed and coherently sequenced in order to establish a strong foundation for all our pupils. Our curriculum also provides pupils with opportunities to develop reading, writing and mathematical skills within this and interdisciplinary literacy is a key driver of curriculum development. Oracy is also an integral part of literacy and, in turn, all we do; empowering pupils to articulate their knowledge, understanding and thinking. Knowledge acquisition is central to our vision and we provide rich, purposeful and varied contexts and opportunities for pupils to acquire disciplinary knowledge and then to develop and apply this.

This rationale explains the principles of how we have designed the curriculum for our pupils in KS1 and KS2 and how these principles underpin our selection of the things we want them to learn.

Each subject within the curriculum has a further subject-specific rationale which demonstrates how we have selected what we want pupils to learn in each subject and how we have chosen the order in which to teach this so that pupils make progress in their learning.

Our overall curriculum design is underpinned by our vision for what the pupils in our communities need to thrive and become confident learners. Our Curriculum offer identifies the **Knowledge, Attributes, Skills and Experiences** we seek to develop in our pupils.

Our curriculum design begins with and is driven by subject **knowledge**. The driver for our planning is to develop expertise by ensuring that pupils master, over time, the key substantive and conceptual knowledge within each subject discipline. We think of **knowledge** as consisting of

- **Substantive knowledge** - the substance of each unit of learning and its associated vocabulary, connected through the subject to other units by substantive concepts - the “big ideas” of each subject. Our planning is underpinned by a “big picture” of the subject which includes, but is not limited to, the outlines of substantive knowledge specified in the National Curriculum.
- **Disciplinary knowledge** - the way in which the thinking in each subject develops as pupils build more substantive knowledge, what are commonly thought of as the subject specific skills - the ways of knowing or “know-how” - of each subject domain.

The design of the curriculum within each subject is characterised by the relationship between **substantive** and **disciplinary knowledge**, interwoven and built over time and developmentally appropriate to age and stage. Knowing more, remembering more and making conceptual connections differs in each subject. Some subjects work to a hierarchy of substantive knowledge and concepts,

while others build knowledge cumulatively and pupils revisit substantive concepts, deepening their knowledge and understanding as they do so. Each subject rationale makes explicit how the elements are woven together. From this, in each school, we plan the order and sequence of how this knowledge will be learned through detailed medium term and unit plans.

You can see examples of how this would look, alongside planning documents [here](#).

We want our pupils to know more and understand more, but we also want them to be “explorers” of knowledge. We believe that, for our pupils, we need to design learning opportunities to promote key **attributes** of character which are associated with developing an appetite and a thirst for learning. Pupils need to see models of how these attributes are key to higher achievement and pride in their work. As they gain more knowledge, they are changed by what they learn, and they grow more detailed and conceptual connections (“schemata”) within subject disciplines.

For the same reason, we have identified a range of **skills** which are characteristics of effective learning. The **substantive** and **disciplinary knowledge** within each subject provides a framework for how pupils get better and make progress in that subject developing subject skills. These characteristics of effective learning are drivers of pedagogical design. We place particular emphasis on the development of exploratory talk and of reasoning to apply the substantive vocabulary pupils are learning in different subjects (fluency and communication).

Experiences of activities, visits to places and encounters with people or background context provide stimulus for and models of how knowledge is gained and used for purpose. The design and planning of our curriculum makes explicit the weaving in of authentic **experiences** which give pupils the opportunities to see where knowledge and learning could take them.

Learn more about KASE and how it is embedded in our learning [here](#).