

# Forest Lodge Academy

## Curriculum Policy

### Vision/Values

#### **‘A unique family working together to be the best’**

At Forest Lodge Academy our vision is that through outstanding leadership we will provide the highest quality education to enable every pupil to realise their full potential.

We have designed a curriculum ensuring that powerful *knowledge*<sup>1</sup> and skills are at the forefront of our progressive and **ambitious** curriculum. To address the disadvantage within our school context, our curriculum is designed to motivate and engage pupils in learning using a thematic approach, providing context, meaning and real life experiences. We motivate and engage all pupils in their learning through curriculum embedded themes, providing connections between knowledge, which children can take with them and expand year on year. This approach makes the subjects more relevant and interesting for our pupils who have little experience of the world outside their immediate location. We view the design of the curriculum as an evolving and developing process, which takes into consideration: the needs and character of our children; the children’s prior learning; children’s experiences; the community in which school exists, the statutory curriculum (National Curriculum) and educational research that is relevant to our school. Our curriculum is the means by which we achieve our objectives of educating children in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to lead fulfilling lives, become ambitious learners and built readiness ready for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning context.

The Department for Education (Mental health and behavior in schools, November 2018) states that ‘Schools have a central role to play in enabling their pupils to be resilient and to support good mental health and wellbeing’. We believe that social and emotional well-being of our children is a crucial in helping them to cope with the pressures they may encounter as they grow up. As a result we aim to embed crucial life skills within our curriculum and each individual child. All staff are committed to supporting children’s happiness and developing character traits that will help them be successful both at school and in life. Our *Character Muscles* run throughout our curriculum as we continue to promote transferable life skills by incorporating the Route to Resilience Programme. We use the Route to Resilience ‘Character Muscles’, which are introduced in assemblies, discussed in class and promoted through activities and actions, to underpin our teaching in all subjects. This is also part of our LEAD Academy values vision, strong **leadership** at every level; **empowering** every child to aim high; giving every child the opportunity to **achieve** and constantly **driving** for improvement.

Our evolving and developing curriculum is constantly monitored and updated with subject leaders’ ongoing pedagogical knowledge. The current curriculum has been reviewed in light of COVID and its corresponding effects on schools and pupils. As a result of COVID school closures, all subjects have been updated with clear priorities in each set up for September 2021. Each subject lead has identified pupils learning gaps and responded through their curriculum documents.

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<sup>1</sup>Young and Lambert, Knowledge and the Future School, 2014

## **Curriculum Intent**

Forest Lodge Academy is a happy, lively and caring place where each pupil's uniqueness is cherished and where they are encouraged to learn in a safe, positive environment and to develop a passion for learning. All of our pupils will achieve success through experiencing creative and active lessons with real life experiences. Our curriculum designed with the intent of providing cumulative and sequenced learning that focuses on powerful knowledge identified within the national curriculum and ready pupils for their next phase of education. We are committed to a thematic approach that links powerful knowledge<sup>2</sup> with building each pupil's cultural capital and ambition towards education, therefore giving them the best chances of success. We know the best way to accomplish this within our school, where there is high levels of disadvantage and SEND, is through delivering a high quality curriculum that teaches all subject skills discreetly within our thematic school approach, adapted to suit the needs of all learners. Our curriculum inspires, motivates and connects learning so that powerful knowledge is better retained within long term memory, thereby allowing new learning to become 'sticky'. Our role, in partnership with parents, is to build the foundations for a successful education, to enable each child to discover the joy of learning, to encourage children to help them to fulfil every aspect of their potential and to encourage their growth into effective citizens, ready to play their part in the world and their community.

In order to plan effectively, we have developed subject specific progression documentation which is personalised to our school's topics and the needs of our children. Where possible these are linked to our whole school thematic approach to encourage long term memory of their learning. In partnership with our progression documents each subject lead has produced a yearly overview so that it is clear how and when concept areas are being taught.

The themes we teach cover wide and varied topics and are designed to help pupils to remember long term the content they have been taught. We endeavour to ensure pupils connect their long term knowledge to new learning, thereby integrating building blocks into their scope of broad knowledge.

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<sup>2</sup> Young and Lambert, Knowledge and the Future School, 2014

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Key intentions that drive our curriculum.

### **1: Develop our learner's learning**

#### **(Our head and body: what we learn)**

To develop the appropriate subject specific knowledge, skills and understanding as set out in the National Curriculum, so that children can flourish, reach and exceed their potential academically, emotionally, creatively, socially and physically. This will be achieved through an inclusive, ambitious, engaging, exciting and balanced educational curriculum that is focussed on providing knowledge and skills for future learning.

### **2: Develop the character of our learners**

#### **(Our heart and character: Who we are when we learn)**

To develop learners to have a holistic set of values that prepares them for life in the modern world, being a responsible and ambitious citizen and aware of their impact within a diverse and ever changing community. We aim to inspire pupils to be ambitious learners and offer opportunities for all children to investigate, question, debate and challenge. It will enable all children to flourish and to be the very best they can be.

### **3: Develop behaviours and habits to become effective learners**

#### **(Our actions and attitudes: How we act when we learn)**

To develop the behaviours learners need to succeed in the world such as concentration, resilience, perseverance, confidence, the enjoyment of the love of learning, self-improvement and curiosity, linked to our work with Route to Resilience Programme. This is embedded across our whole curriculum.

### **4: Develop the moral compass of our learners**

#### **(Our place in the community and wider world: Who we are)**

To understand the outcomes of their choices and develop social skills which will help build their role as a member of future society. Understand our own firm set of personal morality as well as the morality of others. Engage in the community and cultures they live in and show respect and understanding of others'.

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## **Curriculum Implementation**

### **Planning**

Forest Lodge Academy engages all learning styles and uses a variety of resources to aid with planning including EYFS framework 2021 and Development Matters, National Curriculum Statutory Guidance, a Skills and Knowledge based curriculum, opportunities for Outdoor Learning and enhancement opportunities which support teaching of the curriculum. Our curriculum is based on the 2014 National Curriculum for Key Stages 1 & 2 and the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) Framework 2021 Curriculum.

Our curriculum is coherently planned to ensure all subjects are taught discreetly and none are narrowed. We achieve this through a systematic planning sequence which develops all layers of learning, building sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning in the 21st century. This is made possible by good subject knowledge within the school and continuing CPD to ensure all staff are able to provide good support for learners as they travel through our ambitious curriculum. Teachers are aware of the different starting points and gaps as a result of the pandemic and plan appropriately for this.

The ambitious Curriculum is planned carefully to ensure full and sequential coverage of all aspects of the National Curriculum, beginning with our long-term plan for each year group. This indicates what topics are to be taught in each term. These are then developed into medium terms plans which clearly highlight the learning objectives, assessment opportunities, differentiated tasks as well as links to other subjects, alongside the time allocation for each lesson/unit and subject. We do this to maintain an equilibrium between subjects and ensure our curriculum is broad.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we use the objectives from the EYFS framework 2021 and Development Matters. We plan the curriculum carefully, so that there is coherence and full coverage of all aspects of the Early Learning Goals, and there is planned progression in all curriculum areas. In both Nursery and Reception we recognise that young children learn best when learning through play. We have based our Nursery and Reception classes on research promoted by Alistair Bryce Clegg and Anna Ephgrave, where through the process of play children can explore, investigate, recreate and begin to make connections which will help them to understand their world. Through play, we believe that children can practise or use what they know and make sense of what is new.

### **Leadership**

Subject leaders play an important part in the success of the curriculum by leading a regular programme of monitoring, evaluation and review and the celebration of good practice contributes to the ongoing commitment to evolve and improve further. They have thought about the end point that they are building towards and know what pupils will be able to do at these end points. All subject leaders are given training and the opportunity to keep developing their own subject knowledge, skills and understanding, so they can support curriculum development and their colleagues throughout the school.

### **Teaching**

Lessons are active, engaging and motivational to ensure pupils remember the long term content that they have been taught which enables them to apply this knowledge into other contexts successfully. Pupils are able to take part in a variety of meaningful discussions based on subject content, giving

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opinions and ideas that have been established throughout the unit of teaching. Teachers plan for all learner's individual needs and staffing is deployed to support this. Themes are connected throughout all curriculum areas and pupils can draw upon new knowledge from different subjects and understand how each theme plays a part in everyday life. First hand, real life experiences engage the pupils at the start of each theme and a variety of resources are used to support this, including ICT, guest speakers and workshops. As the curriculum evolves we are creating subject resource boxes to enable staff to select and have appropriate artefacts, resources and other materials needed to provide the best stimulus and also reduce unnecessary workload.

We recognise the importance of making links between home and school and encourage parental involvement by holding regular curriculum events and workshops to aid and develop parents' knowledge of year group expectations. Parents are also involved with the learning of homework which allows pupils to: practise and consolidate their skills and knowledge, develop and extend techniques and share their work with their family. Our online software also assesses where pupils are and progress can be seen first-hand.

Reading is prioritised to allow all pupils to access the full curriculum offer. Shared reading is evident in all curriculum areas, to aid subject knowledge, skills and fluency. Pupils have access to a variety of high quality reading materials which develops and instils confidence for the enjoyment of reading in a variety of areas.

### **Equality / Inclusion**

The school takes pride in providing a highly inclusive environment, where all learners (SEND, Disadvantaged, MA, EAL etc.) demonstrate high levels of enjoyment in their education and the majority make very good progress in most subjects. Children at all levels are supported to achieve their full potential. All pupils work is demanding and matches the curriculum aims. GD pupils are challenged through higher order questioning and differentiated tasks and other groups, particularly SEND are encouraged and motivated and are given targeted support to aid their needs. A wide range of resources are also used as tools to enable teachers to adapt activities, therefore embedding skills and pupils are guided to develop their own pace and learn in a style that best suits their individual needs.

### **Assessment**

Teachers constantly check pupils understanding throughout lessons by using a range of AFL strategies to inform future planning and ensure knowledge is embedded fluently. This enables teachers to adapt their teaching techniques, questioning and activities as necessary. They identify misconceptions rapidly. Our marking and feedback policy ensures that feedback is given in the moment, verbally or through a guided session, ensuring pupils are aware of their positive outcomes and the next steps in their learning. All core and non-core subject areas are assessed thoroughly termly with adjustments made half termly if necessary.

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### **Curriculum Impact**

Through the curriculum at Forest lodge we strive to ensure that our pupil's attainment in core and non-core subjects is in line or exceeding their potential. All pupils will make good progress academically, emotionally, creatively, socially and physically through our well-constructed and well-taught curriculum. Powerful knowledge, understanding and skills are secured and embedded so that pupil's at least meet national expectations and are fully prepared for secondary school. They have strong communication skills, both written and verbal, and listen respectfully and with tolerance to the views of others. They take pride in all that they do, always striving to do their best. They demonstrate emotional resilience and the ability to persevere when they encounter challenge. They develop a sense of self-awareness and become confident in their own abilities. They will be kind, respectful and honest, demonstrate inclusive attitudes and have a sense of their role in our wider society. Despite the variety of COVID challenges all schools have faced, our thorough curriculum planning has enabled all pupils to maintain their learning momentum, helping them to achieve their full potential and giving them the best possible platform for further successes in schooling and life.