



Our Curriculum Statement

Here at Nicol Mere School, we offer a curriculum that inspires and challenges our children to be the very best they can. It focuses on high academic standards achieved through our progressive knowledge and skills based curriculum.

Learning is a passport to life...enjoy!

Intent

Between 2015 and 2018, we devised our curriculum so that it is appropriate for our children - many of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds and are not 'ready' for school on entry to reception (based on DfE School Readiness Survey and NFER Baseline).

The theory of 'cultural capital' (introduces children to experiences they may not get at home – Ofsted 2019) drives all aspects of school life. It gives our children the knowledge, experiences, vocabulary and aspirations alongside solid core values to believe that they can achieve anything, no matter of ability or background: they can aspire for great things in their lives.

It is also designed so that our children know how to keep themselves safe.

Breadth, balance and coherence are built into all subjects: learning does not begin or end in our classrooms but permeates our school environment and our wider community.

Our Intentions

1. Very high expectations in reading, writing and maths across the whole of the curriculum, so that our children are ready for the wider world.
2. Sequenced progressive knowledge, skills and vocabulary based curriculum complemented with many enrichment opportunities.
3. To offer our children new opportunities and experiences they would not normally have.
4. A curriculum designed so learning is embedded.
5. Children know how to keep themselves safe.
6. Children know what constitutes a healthy relationship and also what different relationships can look like.
7. Promoting our school values which are closely linked to British values.
8. Children are prepared for the next steps in their learning journey.

How did we design our curriculum?

Through the whole of the design process for the curriculum, we considered and reflected on many things:

- Our school values.





- The National Curriculum.
- Knowledge and skill progression.
- Sequenced learning.
- The importance of vocabulary.
- Pedagogy and needs of our children.
- Changes needed to be made based on monitoring.
- National institutions e.g. Ofsted guidance on the curriculum.
- Geographical background being predominantly white British (we identify gaps in our children's awareness and understanding of different cultures and religions. These are addressed no matter how challenging or what obstacles are put in our way.

Sequenced Knowledge

We recognise that knowledge is power and is key to our children's learning. Our curriculum increases and deepens our children's knowledge. Throughout each subject, all our children are taught the content from the National Curriculum Framework. This has been adapted and broadened, with the knowledge the children need, to have an excellent understanding of the topics and subjects as well as considering children's needs and interests. This knowledge is embedded in the children's long term memory as it weaves in out of different topics and different year groups. Consequently, the children retain the new information they have learnt. This knowledge plays an important part in raising standards in maths, writing and reading.

One of the foci when developing our curriculum was sequenced learning. Each subject is carefully planned and developed so that sequenced learning is effective. This sequenced learning is then applied and planned for within all lessons, topics and year groups.

Progressive Skills

Skills are taught and used in each subject. These allow the children to become real scientist, artists and designers etc. who learn to apply and use skills, but also gives them the knowledge and skills to solve problems or complete tasks. These skills are progressive through the year groups. They are reinforced as they are used and applied throughout the years and in different subjects. (See progressive skills map)

Once knowledge, skills and vocabulary have been taught, these are and used in different contexts. Like a web, it allows our children to link these, finding opportunities to use and apply their learning and understanding. Moreover, the knowledge and skills become reinforced and embedded: the children's long term memory is altered. The more the skills and knowledge are embedded, the greater the capacity our children can learn e.g. the children's knowledge and understanding of the 'climate around the world' which is learnt throughout the years is then applied in year 5 when the children learn about importing and exporting around the world.

Our curriculum is vocabulary rich, and we recognise the importance of this especially as our children start school with poor language skills and a limited understanding of words. All subjects focus on vocabulary and promote the use of learning, understanding and using new words. This vocabulary is also reinforced in the children's reading. As the knowledge of our children grows, so does the amount of new words the children are





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learning and understanding. This plays an important role in raising standards in reading/comprehension and writing skills.

Implementation

The development of the curriculum has been a whole school approach with children, staff and governors all playing an important role. A curriculum lead oversees our full curriculum and works alongside subject leaders - supporting and guiding. Training has improved teacher's knowledge, understanding and pedagogy in all subjects making them highly skilled in what they teach. Subject leaders benefit from continuous professional development – they work closely with, and report back regularly to school leaders, governors and outside agencies. They are confident in being challenged by a range of stakeholders and demonstrating the strength of their subject's teaching and learning.

As well as teaching a curriculum that excites, engages and enables our children to develop skills and knowledge to be lifelong learners, we recognise the importance of our children's academic success in Maths and English. The high outcomes achieved in the 3R's give our children the opportunity to start the next part of the learning journey with the best foundations possible:

- Excellent, highly skilled and trained teachers (e.g. several writing moderators, SATs markers, SATs coding experts, Maths specialists, Pupil Premium reviewers etc.) Outstanding quality teaching and learning is priority.
- Employing more teachers to ensure small teaching group sizes.
- Providing catch-up club for targeted pupils.
- High quality coaching and mentoring.
- Monitoring and reflecting to continuously improve.
- Using the DfE. "most effective way of support" document as a benchmark guide.

Baseline online entry to reception assessments show that our children often lack the basic literacy and numeracy skills expected for their age and are 'not ready' for school. This is addressed early on in our children's learning and is given high priority throughout each stage. The curriculum we offer, supports the children further in their English and Mathematics skills and knowledge. We believe that this gives our children the best opportunities and solid foundations for the next part in their learning journey.

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are taught in set classes: class sizes are small. In all year groups, there are focused 'catch up' groups to support pupils in gaining the knowledge and skills to become successful readers, writers and mathematicians. A specialist sports teacher and coach teach all children and support teachers in the delivery of the physical education curriculum. This enables high quality teaching and coaching in all sports and also allows the opportunity for children to participate in a number of afterschool and lunch time clubs. Children regularly compete in sporting competitions.

Teachers are encouraged to make sure pupils 'explain and analyse' instead of only 'remembering and describing'.





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Our outdoor environment is used as an additional 'classroom' and gives opportunities for active learning. The children look after their environment: planting trees, litter picking and sowing seeds. We enhance and enrich our curriculum through educational visits, school performances, visitors to school and a variety of after school clubs.

Parents play an important part in our children's learning journey. We recognise the benefits of parental partnership: creating strong links, supporting children's learning and engaging in all the opportunities the curriculum provides.

The effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our children is an extremely important part through school life. Our aim is to prepare our children for life in modern Britain, enabling them to become active and responsible citizens in society. The fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs are promoted through our school curriculum and our whole school ethos.

Pupils are assessed to check their understanding and drive future planning (AFL assessment drives planning). All subjects are assessed based on the content taught and also the skills covered. As the skills taught in each year are progressive and build upon each other, information is passed up to each teacher and used to inform planning and to support the next steps in each child's learning journey, allowing for any gaps in knowledge or skills to be filled. The school 'makes data work' – collection, analysis and planned action are efficient and are not onerous.

Excellent learning and understanding is evidenced in many ways – ultimately through outcomes and curriculum impact. Stringent monitoring and pupil interviews/surveys by SLT and subject leaders ensures that standards are high across all subjects.

Impact

The quality of education provided is excellent, and pupils' work across the curriculum is consistently of a high standard/quality. Internal and external monitoring and moderating shows that standards across the curriculum are excellent. School senior and middle leaders evaluate the impact of the curriculum and that of teaching and learning on a regular basis. External professional agencies (e.g. Ofsted/HMI, LA consultants) are used to ensure judgements are accurate and used to decide on the next steps in curriculum development being clear.

The curriculum has allowed our children to excel in many subject areas. Our children have become more knowledgeable and know more. They also desire to know more and have the skills to continue building their knowledge. It has helped children to find new interests and talents and has given the children the opportunity to participate in many new and exciting things that they would never normally have the chance to experience.

Standards are excellent in basic reading, writing and maths. National benchmark data shows that over time, pupils do much better than those nationally in all tests and in moderated writing. All distinct groups of pupils achieve well over time. Our disadvantaged children achieve better than others nationally (high values and aspirations) and SENDS pupils benefit from a range of support mechanisms e.g. Nurture LAP learning environments.





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Our children have learnt to be good citizens who tolerate others. They appreciate and look after their community and the environment they live in. They know how to keep safe.

Starting their learning journey well below national expectations, our children go on to leave Nicol Mere well above national averages. This is confirmed by the HMI and Ofsted.

We are proud to say that our children leave Nicol Mere ready and prepared with the knowledge, skills, values, experiences and determination to succeed in their next stage of learning.

