

Our Curriculum Statement

We offer a curriculum that inspires and challenges our children to be the very best they can be. It focuses on high academic standards, achieved through our sequenced, knowledge- and skills-based curriculum.

Learning is a passport to life... enjoy!

Intent

We have devised a curriculum that is appropriate for our children.

Breadth, balance and coherence are built into all subjects, giving our children a wide variety of new learning opportunities and knowledge. The theory of *cultural capital* drives all aspects of our curriculum and whole-school life. It provides our children with opportunities, experiences and language that they may not receive at home. Alongside this, we promote solid core values and aspirations, encouraging children to believe that they can achieve anything, regardless of ability or background. We want all our children to aspire to great things in their lives.

Our Intentions

1. A sequenced, progressive, knowledge-, skills- and vocabulary-based curriculum.
2. Very high expectations and aspirations across the whole curriculum, with a whole-school ethos of attainment with substance for all.
3. High-quality teaching for all.
4. New opportunities and experiences for all our children.
5. Embedded learning.
6. Knowledge and skills to enable our children to keep themselves safe and healthy.
7. Living our school life in accordance with our school values, which are closely linked to British values.
8. Preparing our children for the next steps in their learning journey.

How Did We Design Our Curriculum?

Throughout the curriculum design process, we considered and reflected on many factors:

- Our school values.
- The National Curriculum.
- Knowledge.
- Progressive skills.
- Sequenced learning.
- The importance of vocabulary.
- Success with substance.
- Pedagogy and the needs of our children.

- Theories about embedded learning and overlearning.
- Changes needed as a result of monitoring.
- National institutions, including Ofsted guidance on the curriculum.
- Pupil dynamics and backgrounds.

We recognise that knowledge is power and is key to our children's learning. Our curriculum increases and deepens their knowledge. Throughout each subject, all children are taught the content of the National Curriculum Framework. This has been adapted and broadened to include the knowledge children need to develop an excellent understanding of topics and subjects, while also considering their needs and interests.

This knowledge is embedded in children's long-term memory as it is used and linked to other subjects, topics and year groups. Overlearning is also used to reinforce new knowledge and skills. Consequently, children retain the new information they have learnt.

This knowledge plays an important part in raising standards in mathematics, writing and reading.

Once knowledge, skills and vocabulary have been taught, they are used in different contexts. Like a web, this allows our children to make connections, finding opportunities to use and apply their learning and understanding. Moreover, their knowledge and skills become reinforced and embedded, strengthening their long-term memory.

The more knowledge and skills are embedded, the greater our children's capacity to learn. For example, children develop their knowledge and understanding of the climate around the world throughout their school years. This knowledge is then applied in Year 5 when they learn about importing and exporting around the world.

Sequenced Knowledge

The main focus when developing our curriculum was sequenced learning. Each subject is carefully planned and developed to ensure that learning is effectively sequenced.

There is a clear thread throughout each subject, allowing our children to use previous knowledge to develop new knowledge. This sequenced learning is planned for and applied within all lessons, topics and year groups.

Progressive Skills

Skills are taught and practised to enable our children to become real scientists, artists, designers and more. Children learn to apply and use skills, developing the knowledge and abilities needed to solve problems and complete tasks.

These skills progress throughout the year groups. They are reinforced as they are used and applied over time and across different subjects.

(See the Progressive Skills Map.)

Our curriculum is rich in vocabulary. We recognise its importance, particularly because some children start school with limited language skills and an understanding of fewer words.

All subjects focus on vocabulary and promote the learning, understanding and use of new words. Vocabulary development is sequenced throughout each year group and reinforced through reading.

As our children's knowledge grows, so does the number of new words they learn and understand. This plays an important role in raising standards in reading, comprehension and writing.

Implementation

The development of our curriculum has involved a whole-school approach, with children, staff and governors all playing an important role.

A curriculum lead oversees the whole curriculum and works alongside subject leaders, providing support and guidance. Training has improved teachers' knowledge, understanding and pedagogy across all subjects, making them highly skilled in what they teach.

Subject leaders benefit from continuous professional development. They work closely with school leaders, report back regularly to leaders and governors, and engage with outside agencies. They are confident in responding to challenge from a range of stakeholders and demonstrating the strength of teaching and learning within their subjects.

As well as teaching a curriculum that excites, engages and enables our children to develop the skills and knowledge needed to become lifelong learners, we recognise the importance of academic success in mathematics and English.

The high outcomes with substance achieved in the three Rs give our children the opportunity to begin the next part of their learning journey with the strongest possible foundations.

We achieve this through:

- Excellent, highly skilled and trained teachers, including writing moderators, SATs markers, SATs coding experts, mathematics specialists and Pupil Premium reviewers. Outstanding-quality teaching and learning is our priority.
- Employing additional teachers to ensure small teaching-group sizes.
- Providing catch-up clubs for targeted pupils.
- High-quality coaching and mentoring.
- Monitoring and reflecting to support continuous improvement.
- Using the Department for Education's *Most Effective Way of Support* document as a benchmark guide.

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are taught in set classes, with small class sizes. In all year groups, focused catch-up groups support pupils in gaining the knowledge and skills needed to become successful readers, writers and mathematicians.

A specialist sports teacher and coach teach all children and support teachers in delivering our sequenced physical education curriculum. This enables high-quality teaching and coaching across all sports and provides opportunities for children to participate in a range of after-school and lunchtime clubs. Children also regularly compete in sporting competitions.

Reading and phonics are always high-profile priorities in our school. Children need to be able to read in order to access new knowledge and learn effectively.

Our outdoor environment is used as an additional classroom, providing opportunities for active learning. Children care for their environment by 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, including creating strong links, supporting children's learning and engaging with the opportunities provided by our curriculum.

The effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our children is an extremely important part of school life. Our aim is to prepare children for life in modern Britain, enabling them to become active and responsible citizens.

The fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs are promoted through our school curriculum and whole-school ethos.

Pupils are assessed to check their understanding and inform future planning. Assessment for Learning (AfL) drives planning.

All subjects are assessed according to the content taught and the skills covered. As skills progress and build upon one another throughout each year group, information is passed on to the next teacher and used to inform planning. This supports the next steps in each child's learning journey and allows gaps in knowledge or skills to be addressed.

The school *makes data work*: data collection, analysis and planned action are efficient and not onerous.

Excellent learning and understanding are evidenced in many ways, ultimately through outcomes and curriculum impact. Rigorous monitoring and pupil interviews and surveys conducted by senior leaders and subject leaders ensure that standards remain high across all subjects.

Impact

The quality of education provided is excellent, and pupils' work across the curriculum is consistently of a high standard and quality.

Internal and external monitoring and moderation show that standards across the curriculum are excellent. Senior and middle leaders regularly evaluate the impact of the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning.

External professional agencies, including Ofsted, His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and local authority consultants, help ensure that judgements are accurate and inform the next steps in curriculum development.

Our curriculum has enabled children to excel across many subject areas. They have become more knowledgeable and know more. They also have a desire to know more and possess the skills to continue building their knowledge.

The curriculum has helped children discover new interests and talents and has given them opportunities to participate in many new and exciting experiences that they might not otherwise have had.

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are excellent. National benchmark data shows that, over time, pupils perform significantly better than national averages in tests and moderated writing.



All distinct groups of pupils achieve well over time. Our disadvantaged children achieve better than their peers nationally, supported by our high expectations, values and aspirations. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) benefit from a range of support mechanisms, including Nurture and LAP learning environments.

Our children have learnt to be good citizens who tolerate others. They appreciate and care for their community and the environment in which they live. They also know how to keep themselves safe.

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

