

Curriculum Policy

Hawthorn Primary School



Approved by: Teaching and Learning

Date: May 2015

Last reviewed on: May 2015

Next review due by: May 2018

Aim

At Hawthorn we want to give our children a curriculum that gives them the basic skills they need to be ready for the next stage of education at secondary school, the key skills they need for life and work, and a love for learning and finding things out. We want children to be excited about coming to school.

Basic skills

- the ability to read, write and speak in English, and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function at work and in society (ref: Basic Skills Agency)

Key skills

- Communication – being able to express themselves in speaking and writing and learn from others by listening and reading
- Problem solving – in all subjects at school and real life situations
- Improving their own learning and performance – understanding how to make their work better
- Information technology – using ICT appropriately
- Application of number – using understanding of numbers in real life situations

- Enquiry – asking questions, finding things out
- Reasoning – explaining
- Information processing – organising ideas and information
- Creative thinking – using imagination and having new ideas
- Evaluation – making judgements and decisions about how to improve work

- Self awareness – knowing how they feel and learn
- Managing feelings – knowing what to do about feelings (learn how to deal with anger etc)
- Motivation – wanting to succeed
- Empathy – understanding how others feel
- Social skills – being able to work in groups

How we do this

What we teach is very carefully planned for each class:

- The curriculum is planned according to the children's needs, within the new National Curriculum 2014 framework. Children are involved in the initial discussions about their termly or half-termly topics so that their interests and needs can be met. We follow a thematic curriculum approach so that children can see how links can be made within and across the wider curriculum.

We teach:

- English
- Maths

- Science
- Geography
- History
- French
- Art
- Design & Technology
- Music – delivered as part of the In Harmony music project
- PE
- Personal ,Social, Health & Citizenship Education (PSHCE)
- Religious Education

English

There are several components to the English curriculum:

- Spoken language and listening skills
- Reading
- Writing
- Phonics
- Spelling
- Grammar and punctuation

Phonics is a comprehensive reading strategy and programme delivered from Reception and across Key Stage 1 every day - we believe a systematic approach enables children to develop their reading and therefore their writing skills more effectively. Phonics also provides the necessary foundations for accurate independent spelling later on. Children who need extra Phonics input at Key Stage 2 continue to receive a systematic programme, until their class teacher is confident that they are using their phonic knowledge to help decode and understand any unfamiliar words in a variety of texts and genres. We ensure all teachers and teaching assistants across the school are given regular opportunities to watch effective Phonics lessons as part of their on-going professional development. Year 1 children have a Phonics Screening check in June every year, and those children in Year 2 who did not achieve the required standard whilst in Year 1 re-take the screening check at the end of Year 2.

We use the Letters and Sounds Phonics programme throughout school. We also use elements of the Read Write Inc scheme, such as the reading scheme books, which are an excellent resource. The other main reading scheme books we use are Oxford Reading Tree.

Reading strategies our teachers use regularly include:

- Skimming and scanning
- Close reading of a text
- Developing comprehension (reading for meaning) skills through: activating children's prior knowledge; prediction; questioning and clarifying; imagining; and summarising
- Decoding using phonics skills and understanding the context of the word in the text

Spoken Language and Listening is an integral part of any curriculum area. We develop children's language in a variety of ways. For instance:

- maintaining a language-rich learning environment
- teaching children how to engage in conversation and debate through our Speaking and Listening project
- sharing stories
- using drama strategies like hot-seating
- holding an after-school debating club for children in Year 6

We are currently part of a local authority project focusing on Speaking and Listening.

We read in a number of different ways, all of which are planned for to ensure high quality direction and support where appropriate:

- home readers
- shared reading with the whole class
- guided reading with a group in class
- hearing individual children read
- children reading independently

Children's progress in reading is tracked through our pupil tracking system (attainment and progress) and teachers and teaching assistants use reading records to record children's reading at any given time.

We have a wide selection of fiction and non-fiction books, available in our newly-developed Library, in classrooms and in the Key Stage 2 Guided Reading area.

Writing is approached in a practical way. We recognise that many of our children have limited experience of the wider world, so we endeavour to give children as wide a range of experiences as we can so that they can write knowledgeably and meaningfully. We explore the different non-fiction genres, and all the different aspects of fiction writing. The expectation is that by the time they leave us at the end of Year 6, they will have mastered both genres and forms of writing and can write independently.

The Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar aspects of the new English curriculum are taught in a number of different ways, including discrete lessons where it is deemed appropriate, or through the use of the class reading material, or as part of a more general shared writing lesson. Handwriting is taught in a cursive style from Reception, and we expect high standards of presentation in all aspects of pupils' work.

Maths

Maths is broken down into four Maths Attainment strands:

- MA1 Using and Applying
- MA2 Numbers and the Number System
- MA3 Shape, Space and Measures
- MA4 Handling Data

Maths is approached in a practical way and many opportunities are created for the children to apply their mathematical knowledge into many different situations outside the classroom. Real life maths is a crucial life skill and therefore forms an integral part of our Maths curriculum.

We currently use Assessing Pupils Progress sheets (APPs) for every child so that we have a clear picture of progress and attainment for each child, and can then identify next steps in their learning (see Assessment policy). From September 2015, we will be using the Newcastle Primary Assessment scheme as it matches the new National Curriculum more appropriately.

The wider curriculum

Within the framework of the new National Curriculum 2014, we link aspects of the curriculum in a thematic way so that children's learning is given context and meaning.

With the children, the class teacher identifies aspects of the topic given that they would like to focus on over the duration of their learning. From these initial discussions, the teacher is then able to devise a topic web that illustrates a thematic approach to the topic. Teachers work with their peers to develop ideas and expertise.

Medium term plans go with the topic web to explain what is going to be taught throughout the length of the topic. Opportunities for extended writing across the topic are identified so that we can maintain a rigorous focus on developing writing across school.

Not all subjects will be covered each term but all objectives (from the 2014 National Curriculum) will be covered across the Key Stages.

R.E is taught discretely and in accordance with the agreed local authority RE syllabus.

Daily plans show the specific objectives being covered and the activities all groups of children will be doing to meet these objectives. Plans are flexible and will change as a result of assessment for learning to meet the needs of individual children.

Ongoing training is given to teachers in all aspects of the curriculum.

From September 2012 for the following three years, we are part of a world-wide project, El Sistema, which in the UK is known as In Harmony (see www.ihse.org.uk). This is a social inclusion project which seeks to raise esteem, confidence, health and academic performance through learning to play an orchestral instrument. Children will have the opportunity to play in small ensembles and ultimately a school orchestra. This work will be carried out in conjunction with the The Sage Gateshead and Royal Northern Sinfonia.

Monitoring and evaluation

Topic webs are looked at each half term by the head teacher for appropriateness, creative ideas and imaginative approaches. Teachers receive verbal feedback, ideas and support.

Medium term plans are checked each half term by the deputy head to ensure an appropriate breadth and depth of curriculum coverage, that meaningful links are made across the curriculum and Maths and English, and that basic skills are developed appropriately to all groups of children.

Samples of daily plans are monitored regularly by the Maths and English subject leaders.

Classroom observations and more informal 'drop-ins', Learning Walks, and a scrutiny of children's work every half term ensures that the continuous drive to raise standards is constantly at the forefront of our practice.

Regular assessment and data analysis monitors the effectiveness of teaching, and makes sure that success is celebrated. It allows those children who are not making good enough progress are quickly identified so that appropriate interventions can be put in place immediately.

Together, staff evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the curriculum planning cycle during the course of the year, with each subject leader delivering any identified training for their subject, and supporting teachers who are new to teaching or who need further development.

Review

The policy was developed with the curriculum sub committee of the Governing body and is reviewed annually.

*Note: because of the change from one assessment scheme to another from September 2015, this policy will be reviewed in July 2015.

**Governors – May 2015 – Teaching and Learning
Review - May 2018
Headteacher**