

Curriculum

Why we have redesigned the curriculum at Little Paxton



The difference between the National Curriculum and what is meant by “the curriculum”





The new National Curriculum (2014) sets out key ideas and concepts, which are essential for learning in any particular subject.

Each subject in the NC starts with the introductory purpose of the studies and aims. These set out the rationale for teaching this subject and have been written to ensure the key messages are clear.

What follows are the fundamental ideas and material to be taught for each key stage. Apart from English and Maths, the material can be taught in any order. The attainment targets show what pupils are expected to know, apply and understand from the relevant programme of study.



The National Curriculum is not the whole curriculum.
The National Curriculum sets out the subject requirements that maintained schools are required to follow.





The curriculum – taught and untaught – represents the aims, content, pedagogy (teaching) and assessment of what we deliver to the children at Little Paxton. This includes elements such as social and emotional. The focus in education has shifted recently in order for schools to really consider the curriculum they offer. There has been too much focus on “teaching to the test”.

“The job of a good curriculum is to inspire teachers, not instruct them.”

It is useful to think of the National Curriculum as a set of ingredients that can be included in a school curriculum. A school should decide how the ingredients can be put together in the most exciting and effective way. A school should also consider what other ingredients are required to make a really outstanding curriculum that will inspire and challenge all children and prepare them for the future.

Perfect timing for me as a Head new to the school, where my focus has to be on the quality of teaching and learning.



Curriculum Coherence

The curriculum in a school needs to be mapped out, paying careful attention to how what is to be studied is organised.

At the start of each subject in the NC, there is a statement for the big picture. This needs to be held in mind when constructing the long and medium term plans and also in the daily delivery of lessons. We should be reminding ourselves as teachers, and the children, of the connection between what is being taught today and the bigger picture – where it fits.

We also need to be clear to pay careful attention to the underlying knowledge which children need in order to access the subject in later years.

The word “coherence” comes from the Latin “to stick together” and when we think about the curriculum in those terms it becomes much easier to understand and teach.



Since arriving at Little Paxton, I have worked closely with all staff to ensure that:

- There is good coherence across the school (from one year group to the next)
 - Teachers not only really know about their year's curriculum – but also have a clear understanding of where that year's objectives fit into the whole picture of what we offer as a primary school
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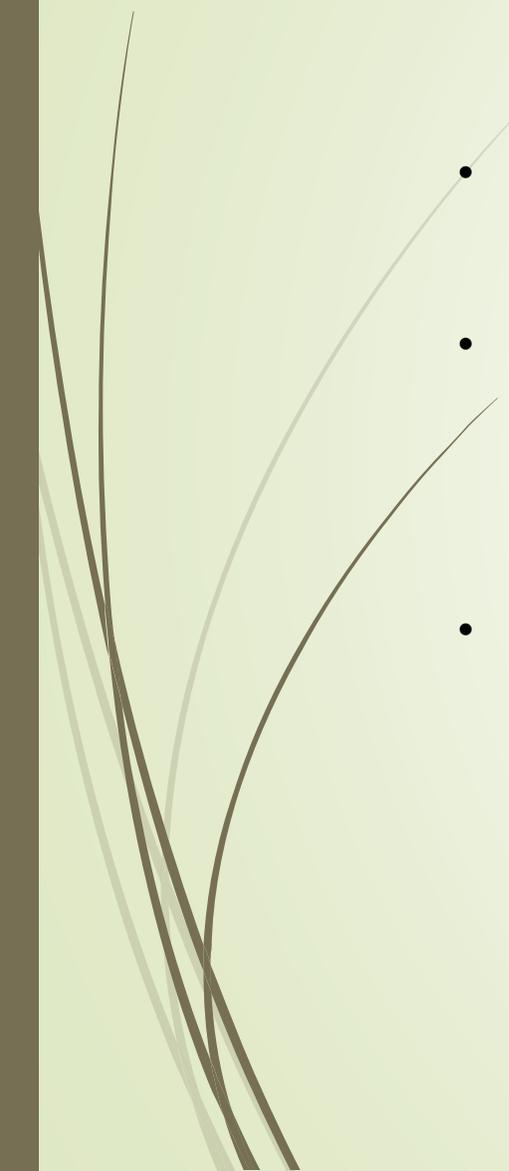


Changes that have been made in the last 15 months at Little Paxton Primary.

- Teachers are now working together and seeing that we are all responsible for the entire journey of children through the school – not just when they are in their class.
- An understanding of how the different year groups “fit” into the curriculum we are offering
- A love of what we are teaching daily
- A curriculum that is meaningful and relevant for our children – especially making the most of links to our local area and using the amazing resource of Paxton Pits for example



What we have done so far to develop our curriculum.

- Looked in detail at the Programmes of Study in Science, History and Geography
 - Mapped out in which year statutory learning objectives become apparent – developing a clear overall provision map for each subject across the school
 - Developed an enquiry based curriculum – each topic starts with a big question which the children need to find the answer to – there may not be a “right” answer, but the children do need to be able to articulate their thoughts around the big question.
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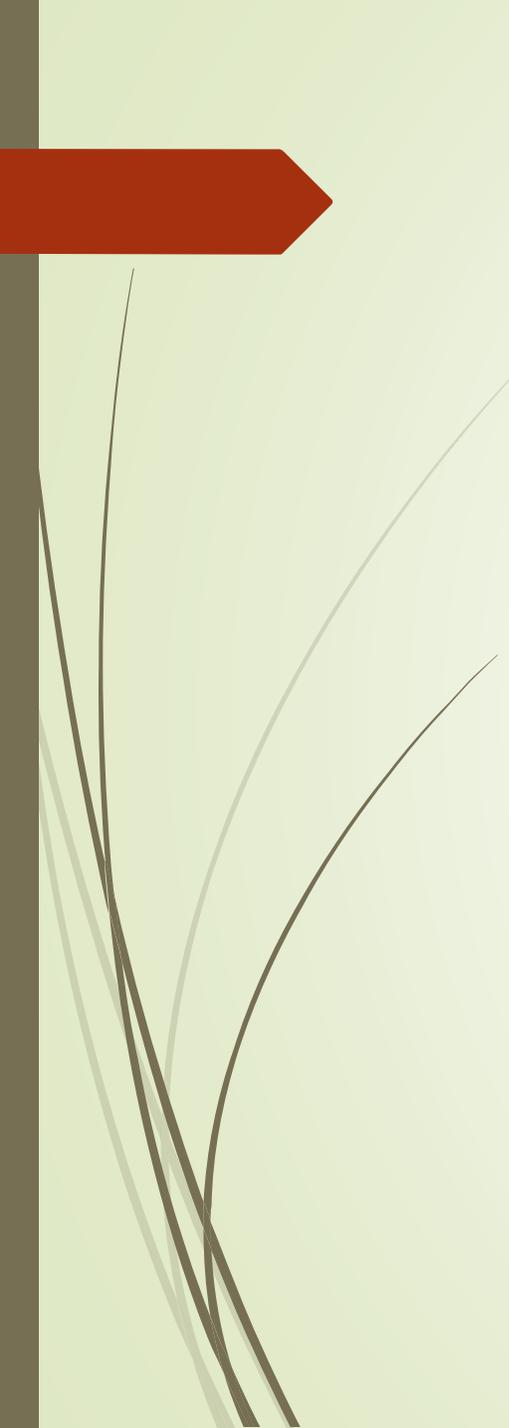
Why take an enquiry based approach to learning?

- It is planned around the distinctive needs the children.
- It promotes curiosity.
- It has a clear outcome, designed to raise standards.
- It gives a real context for the application of basic skills.
- It allows writing to be meaningfully embedded.
- It is interesting for the teacher as well as the children.
- It integrates empowering learning (learn to learn).
- It is underpinned by leading research about quality learning and brain-based learning.



How enquiry based learning works: The learning journey is explicitly shared with children in order to ensure they connect to the big picture of their learning, i.e. knowing what to expect. Each class has an Enquiry Working Wall display that includes a representation of the learning journey, which is referred to and added to as the unit of work progresses.

Hook into learning: Teachers provide an initial stimulus experience that helps children connect with the content and skills of the unit of work. These can take many forms, e.g. a visit from a Roman soldier, finding a message in a bottle, a video diary excerpt, strange foot prints on the classroom ceiling etc. etc.



Pupil Voice: Active planning input from the children is integral to enquiry based learning; we want the children to feel that they are able to drive part of their learning journey. This is essential to ensure that the curriculum meets the ongoing varied needs and interests of the children. Pupil voice is used throughout the unit of work to steer learning by asking children to pose questions that they want to know more about. Teachers refer to children's questions throughout the unit of work so that children can see that their contributions are valued and their questions drive their learning.

Outcome: Each unit of work has an agreed outcome that is shared with the children and may be negotiated with the children. e.g. art exhibition, powerpoint presentation, class debate etc etc.

Reflection Activity ~ Review & Celebration of Learning: At the end of each unit of work there is a reflection and evaluation of learning. This focuses on what has been learnt and how it has been learnt; we want the children to become reflective learners.



Year One topic questions

Was the Great Fire of London really great?

Would you like to sail the seas?

Could you grow a pineapple in Paxton Pits?

Year Two topic questions

Would you like to live on the moon?

Could “Wild” live in Little Paxton?

Why can't a Meekat live in the North Pole?

Year Three topic questions

What lies beneath your feet?

Which Greek god or goddess would be your BFF? (Or
Which Greek monster would be your Patronus?)

Queen Elizabeth 1st – kind or cruel?

****current Year 4 are working on the year 3 big questions as they were taught the Year 4 topics last year****



Year Four topic questions

What did the Romans do for us?

Was Victoria the greatest sovereign?

What was St Neots like during WW2?

Year Five topic questions

Where would you boldly go?

Why should we protect the rainforest and our world?

What was more sacred to the Egyptians – the Nile or their gods?

Year Six topic questions

Can you chase a storm?

Why is Hueng Ho China's sorrow?

Vikings settle in St Neots – are they mad?

EYFS



What do we need to do as a school in order to deliver a better thought out curriculum – current thinking about what works best for children.

- Worksheet, schemes of work
- Better questioning – teachers (no hands up – cold calling – multiple choice – statements –**we are trialing in our classes**)
- Modelled to all staff by Mrs Jenkins and the Robins – using expertise in school to train staff and show what we’re looking for
- Child led, not teacher spouting – the children should be doing more of the work
- Considering our learning environment and how this will show the journey through a topic
- Allowing our children time to “wonder” about their topic – teachers planning out of what the children want to know, from their questions.



Next Steps



Focus on developing a coherent curriculum in other subjects, including Music, Art and Design Technology



Take a look round

See the displays around the school for our big questions!





Any Questions?

Thank you so much for attending this session! We really appreciate your support.

