

Our Curriculum Structure at Wardley CE Primary School

The basis and rationale for the structure of our curriculum:

The timetabling and delivery structure of our curriculum plays a significant role in enabling it to succeed. When considering how to best deliver our curriculum, we were very aware of:

- The compelling research into **spaced learning** (or '**retrieval practice**'). The concept of retrieval practice has its origins in cognitive science. It has a strong evidence base and is becoming more widely discussed amongst teachers around the globe. It is a learning approach focussed on getting information out of pupils' brains (retrieval) after it has been learnt. When we focus only on getting information into pupils' brains, we can be misled by instant recall and success – we assume that because pupils learn quickly, they will remember. This is often not the case. Pupils forget. Retrieval practice intervenes after a pupil has started to forget. They are challenged to retrieve their knowledge. It is not always easy. In a blog post, US educator Doug Lemov (author of Teach like a Champion) explains that "the fact that you must work harder to retrieve it but then do so successfully causes you to build a stronger neural pathway." In the context of curriculum design, we were eager to ensure our curriculum was structured in a way that allowed learning to be spaced over time, providing opportunities for 'retrieval'.
- The advantages of longer **enquiry based units** in providing scope for **deep learning**. By having these focused units, we are better able to 'dive deep' into the learning content using an enquiry based theme. From a learning perspective, we believe this will help pupils develop a stronger knowledge and understanding because they are focussed on a clear line of enquiry over the course of a unit that links and deepens their learning. In the context of curriculum design, we were eager to ensure our curriculum was structured in a way that allowed 'deep dives' into subjects whilst using our time efficiently.
- The benefits of **discrete subject teaching**. We wanted to be confident in our delivery of the full National Curriculum in KS1 and KS2 – we also wanted children to develop a clear understanding and awareness of the separate subject disciplines.
- The opportunities we have to **link learning** across the clear and discrete subject disciplines. We wanted to grasp every opportunity we had to forge meaningful links across the curriculum – when done well, this improves engagement and enhances knowledge retention.

Our curriculum structure aims to combine both longer timetabled 'blocks' of **deep learning** with the research around **spaced learning**.

Our Curriculum Structure

At Wardley CE Primary we have divided the National Curriculum into three sections:

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Essential Opportunities (Breadth of Study) | | |
| Threshold Concepts (Planning foci, Assessment foci) | | |
| Milestone 1 The standard to reach by the end of Y2 | Milestone 2 The standard to reach by the end of Y4 | Milestone 3 The standard to reach by the end of Y6 |

Essential Opportunities (Breadth of Study) are the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum for England. The school's long term curriculum plans ensure coverage of these essential opportunities. They provide the subject's substantive knowledge.

Threshold concepts are the assessment and planning foci. They cover the subject's disciplinary knowledge and are used as learning objectives. However, they are not achieved. They are advanced systematically and gradually from Year 1 through to Y6. To this end, they are relatively few in number and therefore repeatable. This is to avoid a shallow, skimming approach to teaching whereby many objectives are covered but not necessarily learned. Instead, the threshold concepts may be repeated in a number of meaningful and exciting ways to allow for spaced learning so that they are learned deeply.

The milestones provide assessment criteria for each threshold concept. They describe the progression as follows:

- Milestone 1 – the expected attainment by the end of Y2.
- Milestone 2 – the expected attainment by the end of Y4.
- Milestone 3 – the expected attainment by the end of Y6.

Which subjects do we teach and when?

Most subjects in KS1 and KS2 are taught every half-term. This list includes mathematics, English, science, PE, RE, French, computing, art and design, music and PSHE. The exceptions to this pattern are geography, history and design and technology. Geography and history are taught in units over alternating half-terms. This allows a series of longer afternoon sessions to be devoted to each subject to facilitate deep learning around the enquiry based unit. Design and technology is taught in a focused unit at the end of each term. This is to allow pupils and staff to focus on the design process in longer sessions without being interrupted by the need to tidy away resources.