



Oughtibridge Primary School

Curriculum Aims, Principles and Ethos Statement

At Oughtibridge Primary School we aim to provide a curriculum to develop inquisitive, independent thinkers with a love of learning. We understand that the curriculum, both within taught lessons and beyond them, should create an environment where questioning, academic risk-taking, divergent thinking and the freedom to learn from mistakes are all encouraged.

The curriculum should be seen in its widest sense as the entire planned learning experience. This includes formal lessons as well as events, routines, and learning that take place outside the classroom. It should be seen within the overall aims and ethos of the School, which are at the core of its objectives.

Our curriculum is designed to allow each student to:

- achieve the best possible academic qualifications and standards, whatever their ability
- ensure high levels of engagement, enjoyment and personal development

Our curriculum is based around four key ideas, or 'AIMS'. Through these AIMS, we ensure key skills for life are taught every day. The AIMS are:

Aspiration

We have high expectations of all members of the school community, staff, pupils, parents and governors. Together we aim to support, nurture and challenge children to achieve the very best they can in all aspects of school life. We aim 'high', fostering a positive attitude towards learning and teaching the children skills for life. We expect children to persevere, take risks, work outside their comfort zone and to be resourceful, resilient, thoughtful and co-operative.

Inspiration

We seek to inspire learning through a curriculum which is seated in first hand learning experiences and delivered through high quality teaching. We are extremely proud of our curriculum which encompasses enterprise, modern foreign languages, creative arts, environmental issues and investigating beyond the classroom. Children are challenged to lead their learning which is relevant and in context to the times in which they live in order to prepare them for their future. Through the range of inspirational visitors that come into school the children discover whole new worlds. We are able to take advantage of the stunning hills, valleys and moorlands that surround school and the children use these as a stimulus for learning.

Motivation

The children are motivated to learn through the positive experiences they encounter every day. These are practical and relevant to their life experiences as well as to academic objectives. There are many special themed days and weeks, celebrations, competitions and rewards. Children are proud to become members of the School Council, be Playground Friends and Listening Buddies. They are exceptionally proud of themselves if they win a much coveted 'Gold Star'. The children in KS2 cannot wait to sign up for the four residential experiences on offer. All the children in school look forward to educational visits that enhance learning.

Success

Most of all, individual and group successes are celebrated - in lessons and also through formal events and assemblies. Fostering pride in our children's achievements, whether big or small, is essential in building self-esteem and resilience. All members of the school community actively support the achievements of each other. Due to the enthusiasm, commitment and engagement of all the children and staff at Oughtibridge Primary School we have earned many awards including the Gold Arts Mark, Green Flag for Eco Schools and the International Dimensions Certificate. Through the extensive range of extra-curricular provision many children receive certificates and medals from the Children's University.

While our AIMS set out how we work, we share and work towards the following vision, across our entire curriculum:

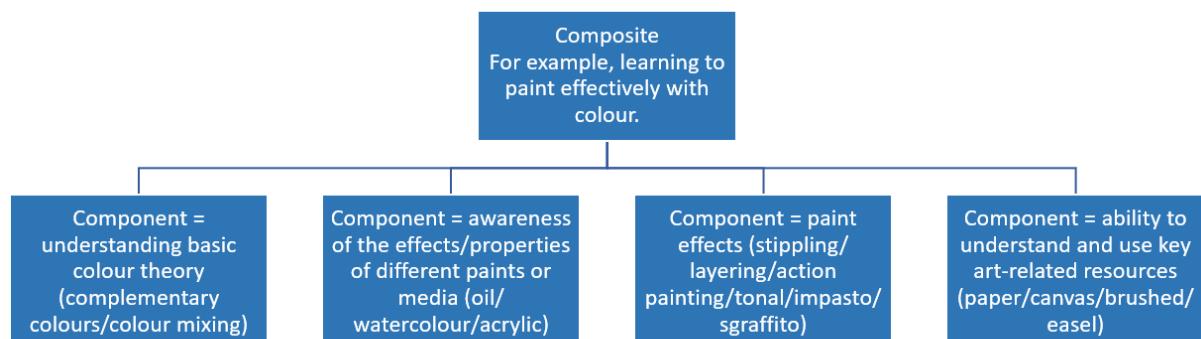


Pedagogy (the methods we use to teach and the elements we prioritise)

Out analysis of our pupil population (including the fact that our prevalent SEND need is centred around Communication and interaction), led us to conclude that we needed to redesign our curriculum to be **more language rich** (incorporating composite knowledge schema in order to bolster the use of technical vocabulary), **oracy led** and **cohesive**. All teaching therefore focusses on a cross curricular approach where there is lots of rich questioning used by adults, discussion with and by children and lively, immersive events planned that ensures children truly understand the topic at hand. We provide experiences that will engage and inspire in order to build composite knowledge over time.

By composite knowledge schema, we are referring to the idea where composite knowledge is the basis for any planned learning activity. We plan to teach the explicit component knowledge blocks during a teaching sequence so that children can understand and apply the composite knowledge that results in a high standard of applied knowledge. This is different to simply envisioning teaching skills alone.

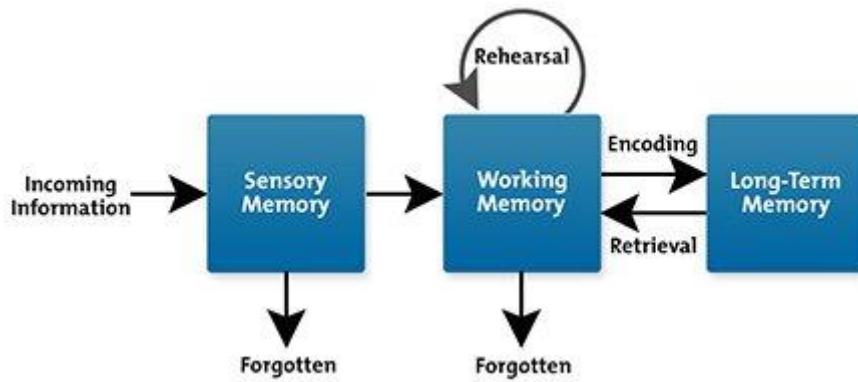
The example below shows how composite knowledge can be broken down into components:



Composite: a performance made up of several parts or components

The implications for our curriculum is that we organise our learning blocks in a way that build on each other, and children then demonstrate that they know more and can do more as a result. Our approach also incorporates Cognitive Load Theory. In cognitive psychology, cognitive load refers to the effort being used in the working memory¹.

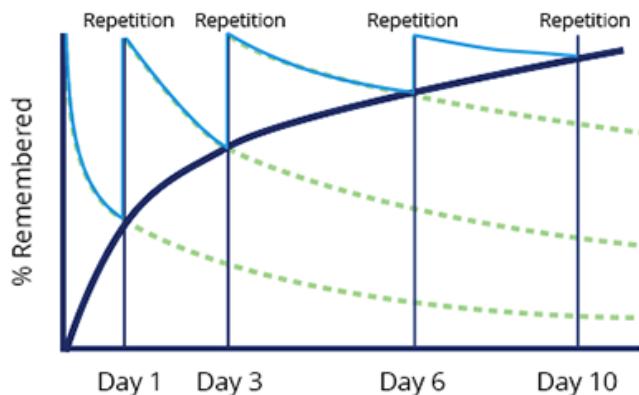
¹ Adapted from Atkinson, R.C. and Shiffrin, R.M. (1968). 'Human memory: A Proposed System and its Control Processes'. In Spence, K.W. and Spence, J.T. The psychology of learning and motivation, (Volume 2). New York: Academic Press. pp. 89–195



"Cognitive load" relates to the amount of information that working memory can hold at one time. Sweller (1988)² said that, since working memory has a limited capacity, instructional methods should avoid overloading it with additional activities that don't directly contribute to learning. By taking account of Cognitive Load Theory we design lessons and sequences of lessons which reduce the demands on learners' working memory, so that they learn more effectively. This supports the move to focussing on composite knowledge.

Finally, in order to ensure that we maintain a mastery approach, we also revisit earlier blocks of linked knowledge at the start of lessons. Spaced Learning³ is a learning method in which highly condensed learning content is repeated, and we this provides the final part of our pedagogical response to our curriculum redesign.

Spaced Repetition

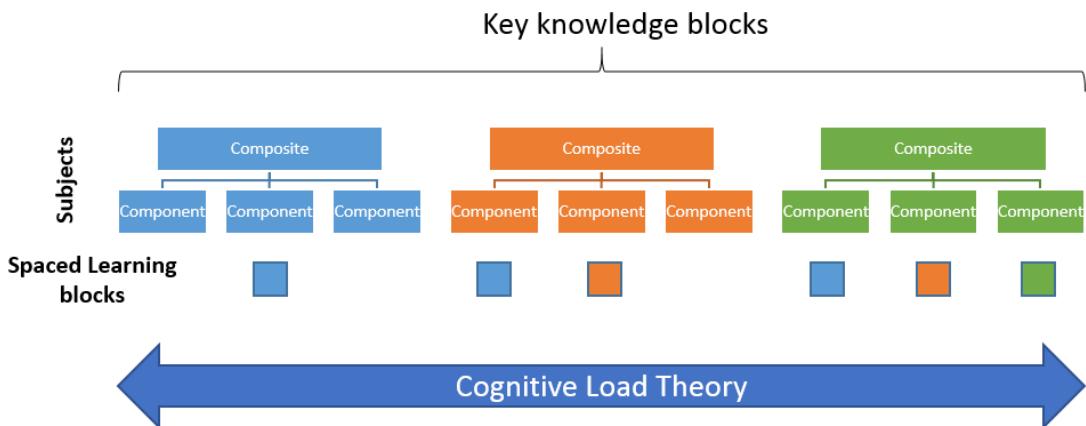


It is based on the temporal pattern of stimuli for creating long-term memories reported by Fields (2005)⁴. This 'temporal code' Fields used in his experiments was developed into a learning method for creating long-term memories by Kelley (2008) and supports a knowledge led approach that is mindful of Cognitive Load, resulting in the effective development of composite knowledge.

² Sweller, J. (1988) 'Cognitive Load During Problem Solving: Effects on Learning,' Cognitive Science, Volume 12, Issue 2, April 1988.

³ Paul Kelley, *Making Minds: What's wrong with education- and what should we do about it?*, Routledge, [ISBN 0-415-41411-3](https://www.routledge.com/9780415414113)

⁴ R.Douglas Fields (February 2005), Making Memories Stick, Scientific American, pp. 58–63



A worked example

Prior to our curricular redesign, we observed a session where many strengths in teaching were evident. In the session, children were asked to describe a Polar Bear, which was part of a cross curricular approach. Children described the bear using similes, which was the focus of the lesson. One child wrote “The Polar bear is as fluffy as a blanket.” Although this is lyrical and appropriate within the context of the lesson, it could be improved when we consider that a Polar Bear is actually a potentially dangerous animal and a skilled hunter. The child has written this (and succeeded against the stated objective) but lacked knowledge of what a Polar bear is like in real life (e.g. immense, dangerous etc) and may have been able to demonstrate this knowledge via authorial intent in choosing words that do not give an image of a fluffy and welcoming creature, which is more appropriate for a teddy bear.

Consider if instead of starting with a traditional English lesson structure, the teacher had instead taught the key knowledge (realising that starting with a Geography lesson would be more impactful rather than English) and instead taught the writing skills later – perhaps after the child had compared their own footprint to a life size print out of a Polar bear footprint or looking at the anatomy of a Polar Bear and discussing why it might need claws and sharp teeth. Would the word choice have been better? Haven’t we then moved a perfectly fine expected standard phrase nearer to greater depth one *because of the child’s level of understanding?*

Our learning is based on a simple concept: teach the children what they need to know in the right order. By carefully selecting what to teach and when to teach it, and using the pedagogical approaches described above, we find our children excel – and are ready for Secondary school when the time comes to leave us.

Content

For most of their time in the school, children work with their own class teacher. Their work will be based on policies and programmes which have been agreed by the whole staff, which take into account both national and LA guidelines. Teachers plan the details in small teams and these will change according to the needs of the children concerned. All our current policies and schemes of work are available for viewing by parents or carers. Please ask at the School Office.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Children in the Foundation Stage class follow the EYFS statutory framework which comprises of 7 areas of learning:

- **Communication and language development** involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children are also helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- **Literacy development** involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Years 1 to 6

Children in Years 1 to 6 follow the National Curriculum. The National Curriculum provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge they need to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said, and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement. The National Curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum.

The Core subjects are:

- **English**
- **Mathematics**
- **Science**

The Foundation subjects are:

- **Art**
- **Computing**
- **Design and Technology**
- **Foreign Languages (Spanish)**
- **Geography**
- **History**
- **Music**
- **Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (including Relationships, Sex and Health Education)**
- **Physical Education**
- **Religious Education**

Other principles of Teaching and Learning

The National Curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to range beyond the National Curriculum specifications.

At Oughtibridge Primary School we believe that an important part of Teaching and Learning is the interactive process between teacher and pupil.

The school community, which includes pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and governors, all work towards the school's aims by:

- building children's esteem as individuals and respecting their rights, values and beliefs
- fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community
- providing a well ordered environment in which all are fully aware of behavioural expectations and responsibilities
- offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life and recognising the importance of different cultures
- encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviour and work
- working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another.

Teachers are endeavouring to:

- create a positive climate based on understanding and good relationships within the classroom and the whole school
- provide a challenging and stimulating programme designed to enable all children to reach the highest standards of personal achievement
- recognise and be constantly aware of the needs of each individual child according to ability and aptitude
- ensure that learning is progressive and continuous

- be good role models - punctual, well prepared and organised
- maintain an up-to-date knowledge of the National Curriculum
- have a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise
- establish links with the community to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life
- work collaboratively with a shared philosophy expressed through individual strengths and a variety of teaching styles.

Pupils are expected to contribute by:

- working hard, listening and participating actively in lessons
- attending school regularly
- being punctual, independent and ready to begin lessons on time
- being organised, bringing necessary kit, taking letters home promptly, returning reading books regularly
- conducting themselves in an orderly manner in line with the Behaviour Policy
- taking a growing responsibility for their own learning.

Parents are expected to contribute by:

- ensuring that children attend school in good health, maintained by adequate diet, sleep and exercise
- ensuring that pupils attend regularly, punctually and without unnecessary absence
- providing support for the discipline within the school and for the teacher's role
- being realistic about their children's abilities and offering encouragement and praise
- participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainments
- ensuring early contact with school to discuss matters which affect a child's happiness, progress and behaviour
- showing interest and valuing children's work and providing practical support, e.g. hearing reading, supporting homework, helping with topic research.