



Discovery Schools
Academy Trust

Curriculum Policy 2016

Introduction

Discovery Schools Academy Trust (DSAT) believe that an effective curriculum will promote curiosity and a love of learning. This document contains a common set of values, objectives and curriculum principle and practices to which all DSAT schools subscribe.

A bespoke set of opportunities within each school's curriculum offer enables us to meet the particular needs of the children within each DSAT school. The National Curriculum is used as the common starting point for each school to construct their curriculum around. Schools enrich their local offer by using cross curricular thematic approaches. We are committed to developing the whole child and ensure that the curriculum is appropriate for their stage of education regardless of their age. Our children have opportunities to be creative, to be physically active and to be academically challenged. We seek real life experiences and opportunities that enable children to work together within and between DSAT schools.

Through joint practice development, all curriculum leaders within our schools continually review and improve the curriculum we offer to our children. Each school is expected to develop a curriculum that evolves according to the needs of its children and to the aspirations of the staff and community whilst upholding the contents of this DSAT Curriculum Policy.

Values

We value the uniqueness of each child. Our curriculum promotes respect for their views and for people of all creeds and cultures. We value the spiritual and moral development and the intellectual and physical growth of each child.

We value the importance of each person in our community. Schools organise their curriculum so that they promote co-operation and understanding between all members of the Trust community. Each school uses their local community to enrich their curriculum.

We value the rights enjoyed by each person in our society. We respect each child in our school for who they are, and we treat them with fairness and honesty. We aim to enable each person to be successful, and we provide equal opportunities for all children and adults in our multi academy trust.

We value our environment and we aim, through our curriculum, to teach respect for our world, and how we should care for it for future generations, as well as our own.

We value parents and work in partnership with them to enrich the curriculum. Parents are informed about the curriculum through topic letters, homework and curriculum workshops, and are positively encouraged to become involved.

Our values strongly reflect British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and respect and tolerance for those of other faiths and beliefs.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of the curriculum in DSAT schools are:

- To ensure that all children, regardless of starting point and barriers, achieve their potential
- To promote a positive attitude towards learning, so that children enjoy coming to school, and acquire a solid basis for successful lifelong learning
- To teach children to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to understand right from wrong
- To enable children to have respect for themselves and high self-esteem, and to be able to live and work co-operatively with others
- To enable children to gain the skills and attributes of motivated, resilient and independent learners and to apply their knowledge and understanding to real life situations
- To help children understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all
- To encourage children to ask questions and assess risks
- To enable children to develop their intellect including their emotional development and the development of positive character traits
- To encourage children to be passionate about what they believe in and to develop their own thinking
- To enable children to gain age appropriate skills and knowledge in English, Mathematics, Science and Information Technology (IT) / Computing
- To enable children to be creative through art, dance, music, drama and design technology

- To enable children to grow up as healthy individuals who enjoy exercise and appreciate the importance of a healthy lifestyle
- To enable children to learn about their developing world, including how their environment and society has changed over time
- To give every child the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument
- To enable children to learn about and gain respect for other cultures
- To provide the opportunity for every child to learn the basics of a foreign language
- To encourage children to develop their own personal interests
- To enable children to understand Britain's cultural heritage and traditional British values
- To enable children to become effective citizens in British society and to understand ways in which they can make a positive impact in their community
- To fulfil the recommendations of the National Curriculum and the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

Curriculum Organisation and Planning

Each school within the Trust is autonomous in the creation and delivery of its own curriculum to meet the needs of its children. We expect each school to follow the trust aims and objectives but to deliver these in a way that is appropriate to their school.

Generally topics of work have no predefined length but will be grouped across the year to suit the year group curriculum aims and necessary coverage of skills.

Where possible schools seek to share planning and topics to encourage joint practice development. To this end, similar approaches exist in many DSAT schools, enabling staff to exploit shared opportunities and peer review.

The Trust has developed a core scheme of work for English and Mathematics which schools are encouraged to follow.

Many Trust schools use elements of the Cornerstone Curriculum, however there is no prescribed scheme in place across DSAT schools.

All teachers are expected to provide a medium-term plan, which gives clear guidance on the objectives and teaching strategies that will be used when teaching each topic.

Short-term plans of no longer than one week are produced for English and Mathematics.

In the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2 we adopt an inter-disciplinary topic approach to curriculum planning. We plan the curriculum carefully so that there is coherence and full coverage of all aspects of the National Curriculum and early learning goals, and there is planned progression in all curriculum areas.

Each topic may have specific subject foci and may not cover all subjects. Over the three terms of the academic year each child has the opportunity to experience the full range of National Curriculum subjects.

Children with Special Needs

The curriculum in our schools is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend each DSAT school. If a school thinks it is necessary to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of individual children, then they do so only after the parents of the child and relevant professionals have been consulted.

If a child has a special need, our schools do all they can to meet their individual needs. We comply with the requirements set out in the SEN Code of Practice in providing for children with special needs. If a child displays signs of having special needs, his/her teacher makes an assessment of this need. In most instances the teacher is able to provide resources and educational opportunities which meet the child's needs within the normal class organisation. If a child's need is more severe, we consider the child for referral to receive an individualized Education Health Care Plan, and we involve the appropriate external agencies when making this assessment. We provide additional resources and support for children with special needs.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Our EYFS curriculum meets the requirements set out in the revised National Curriculum at Foundation Stage. Our curriculum planning focuses on the six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication – language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

All DSAT schools fully support the principle that young children learn through play, and by engaging in well-planned structured activities. Teaching in the Foundation class builds on the experiences of the children in their pre-school learning. We do all we can to build positive partnerships with the variety of nurseries and other pre-school providers in each area.

On entry to foundation stage, class teachers begin to assess their current level of development of each child in order to inform future planning. A formal, individual baseline assessment, using materials supplied through NFER is completed within the first month of each child starting school.

We believe the support of families is essential if teachers are to make outstanding progress in our schools. Each school is expected to strive to build positive links with the parents and carers of each child by having a carefully planned induction process. This relationship with families is nurtured throughout their time in Foundation Stage and onto KS1.

Key Skills

The following skills have been designated as 'key skills' in the National Curriculum:

- Communication
- Application of number
- Information technology
- Working with others
- Improving own learning and performance
- Problem-solving
- Analytical reasoning

Schools strive to develop these skills across the curriculum.

Extra-Curricular Activities

All schools are expected to provide extra-curricular activities to expand and meet the interest of its children. Opportunities for participation for all children should be explored. The Trust provides a range of sporting and Arts activities which are designed to increase the number of children who can participate in representing their school. Where possible, schools provide before and after school wrap around care with activities linked to the curriculum.

Pupil Voice

Each school has a school council and encourages children to elect representatives to provide opportunities for pupil voice to be heard within school. Each school council has a budget and uses it to promote learning and opportunities within their school. The council may be engaged to interview staff for positions and to act as ambassadors of the school.

The Trust organises and operates a children's parliament that is made up of representatives from each school. Schools each select three Members of Discovery Parliament (MDPs) who are then assigned roles within one of the four parliamentary select committees.

The four select committees are

- The Arts
- Well Being
- STEM
- Literature and Learning

Schools identify from their three MDPs one child to be a Minister within the Cabinet. The cabinet meets and selects from its number a Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Chancellor. Ministers with special responsibilities for areas of the school curriculum are also elected. The cabinet is provided with an annual budget to set priorities and develop learning opportunities between schools. The cabinet is expected to report to the Trust Directors three times a year.

Celebration of Excellence and Effort

Each school has its own rewards and systems to celebrate children's successes. DSAT organises an annual awards event to celebrate children's and adult's contributions and efforts. All schools may nominate children and adults for each category. The Trust selects three candidates in each category to attend the prestigious awards ceremony.

Curriculum Leadership

Each school decides how to distribute the leadership of specific areas of the curriculum. The role of the each curriculum subject leader is to:

- Provide strategic leadership and direction for the subject
- Support and offer advice to colleagues on issues related to the subject
- Monitor pupil progress in that subject area
- Provide efficient resource management for the subject

It is the role of each curriculum subject leader to keep up to date with developments in their area, at both national and local level. They review the way their area is taught in the school and plan for improvement. This development planning links to whole-school objectives. Each subject leader reviews the curriculum plans for their subject, ensures that there is full coverage of the National Curriculum and that progression is planned into schemes of work. They all attend trust network meetings to share and develop best practice.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher is responsible for the day to day organisation of the curriculum. The Headteacher monitors the curriculum through planning, classroom observation, liaising with the Curriculum Subject Leaders and within School Management Team.

Subject leaders monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school. They examine long-term and medium-term planning, and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used. Subject leaders have responsibility for monitoring standards and ensuring that teachers have the skills and resources they need.

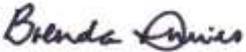
Local Governing Bodies and Advisory Boards offer support to senior school staff in the monitoring of the overall effectiveness of the curriculum within their school. Governors and Advisory Board members may liaise with the leaders of curriculum areas, and monitor the way the school teaches these subjects through visits to school.

Trust System Leaders monitor the effectiveness of the delivery of the curriculum in their regular work with school leaders and in subject networks and through analysis of outcomes for children each term.

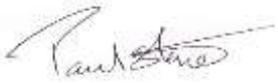
The Trust Strategy Group for Teaching and Learning reviews Trust priorities and initiatives which includes curriculum developments and partnerships. A Headteacher and a Chair of a Local Governing Board are elected to contribute to this group. Outcomes are shared with the Trust Board of Directors.

REVIEW

The Teaching and Learning Strategy Group will review this policy statement annually and update, modify or amend it as it considers necessary to ensure the policy meets the needs of all the schools in the Trust.

Signed 
(Chair of Teaching and Learning Strategy Group)

Date 13.06.16

Signed 
(CEO of DSAT)

Date 13.06.16