

Policy for:
Curriculum Policy
2024/25



Committee: Curriculum and Standards

Document Control

A. Confidentiality Notice

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V1	October 2022	School	Curriculum and Standards 20.10.2022	New school policy developed by Curriculum Lead

St Modwen's Curriculum Policy

At St Modwen's we have a broad and balanced curriculum offer which covers the statutory expectations of the National Curriculum across all subjects. We recognise that the work of curriculum development is never finished and are always keeping our curriculum offer under review to assess its effectiveness, make necessary plans for evolution of certain areas and consider how we can best utilise existing strengths within our school to further benefit the children.

Without a well-sequenced curriculum, pupils will not develop the key fundamental skills of independent reading, mathematical fluency and problem-solving nor gain a knowledge of the world and their role within it.

With a new school mission established in the academic year 21-22, the opportunity arose to reevaluate our curriculum and develop a new model that aligned closely with the new mission statement. We consulted with stake holders and arrived at the following intent.

Intent

Our curriculum aims to offer 'Excellence for all, through Jesus' love.'

With Jesus at the heart, we intend to provide:

1. Excellence for all children.
2. Excellence for all staff.
3. Excellent spaces and opportunities to learn.

We want to ensure that our children secure firm knowledge-rich foundations on which they can build throughout their time at St Modwen's, as they transition into Key Stage 3 and beyond. Using the national curriculum as a jumping-off point, rather than boundaries to remain within, we offer an ambitious curriculum with the core principles of Catholic social teaching weaved throughout.

EXCELLENCE FOR ALL CHILDREN

Our intention is that all children at St Modwen's are supported to access the curriculum, provided with quality-first teaching and given the appropriate scaffolds to support their access no matter their entry point.

EXCELLENCE FOR ALL STAFF

In our endeavour to ensure excellence for all children in our school, we recognise that staff will also need the necessary support to upskill themselves in areas of the curriculum they are less confident in and resources to accompany their teaching which will enhance the quality of lessons, learning and experiences for our children. As a result, we have a long-term CPD development plan which identifies priorities for support and development and, in a timely and workload-conscious way, supports teachers to embark on their own journeys of continuous professional development.

EXCELLENT SPACES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

In our focus on knowledge-rich learning opportunities and a sequential curriculum that builds upon prior learning, we don't want to neglect the 'primariness' of primary school- we want our children to work in engaging and useful environments that are learning-focused, we want our children to have opportunities and experiences that create lifelong memories and above all else, we want our children to feel safe, supported and cared for in our school; with staff modelling the love of Jesus in their interactions with our school community.

Implementation

A KNOWLEDGE-RICH CURRICULUM

“Memory is the residue of thought.”

Daniel T Willingham

The St Modwen’s curriculum is designed with knowledge at its heart to ensure that children develop a strong vocabulary base and an extensive understanding of the world. The curriculum promotes long-term learning, and we believe that progress means knowing more and remembering more. As pupils learn the content of the curriculum, they are making progress. We have developed a curriculum built on current research regarding how memory works to ensure that children not only have access to 'the best that has been thought and said' but are taught this in a way that ensures children can remember the curriculum content in future years.

We make use of knowledge organisers, where appropriate, to ensure children know exactly which information is expected to be learned over the course of their study in a particular subject. These knowledge organisers are a reference tool for children throughout a given sequence of learning and are also shared with parents and guardians so that they can work alongside their children to help bridge the gap between our in-house and at-home learning. Our curriculum aims to ensure pupils are both "interesting and interested". We want them to be 'interesting' to talk to, because they know a great deal about the world and 'interested' in finding out more. We believe that knowledge breeds curiosity - as pupils learn more about the world, they become more curious. It is very difficult to be curious about something that you don't know anything about. We understand that knowledge sticks- the more pupils know, the easier it is for them to know more. As a result, we carefully check and activate prior knowledge to ensure our pupils are able to understand and remember new things they are learning. We utilise retrieval practice inspired tools such as low-stake quizzes, little and often activities and focused questioning to revisit, remind and build upon prior learning.

Our knowledge-rich curriculum is built on the following five principles -

1. Acquisition of 'powerful knowledge' is at the heart of the curriculum

This means that pupils learn knowledge which empowers them to not only understand the world around them but to understand how each subject discipline works to extend this knowledge of the world.

2. Knowledge is specified in fine detail

This means that we set out very precisely what pupils will know and be able to do in each subject. This means that we don't leave anything to chance. If we want pupils to know a specific piece of knowledge we specify when and how this is learned over time. We recognise that this is a big undertaking for teacher, subject leaders and the school leadership team and thus have a realistic approach to the timeframe on this aim. By having a 3 yearly focus subject cycle, we can drill down into a subject and begin this careful knowledge construction- constantly seeking to improve and specify what is being taught where.

3. Knowledge is acquired in long-term memory

This means that we expect all pupils to remember their learning into the future. We have planned the curriculum so that there are many chances for pupils to review what they have already learned and secure it in their memories. We use low stakes quizzing, shared with the children as 'little and often' learning opportunities which not only allow teachers chance to assess retention of knowledge over time, but also support children to build stronger links within their schema.

4. Knowledge is carefully sequenced over time

This means that we have thought carefully about the most effective order to learn new curriculum content

in. We continue to develop our curriculum so that each unit of work in a subject build directly on what has been learned before. This helps pupils understand and remember their learning more effectively. By having a 3 yearly focus subject cycle, we can assess over time the successes of our curriculum sequencing and address issues using assessment/discussion with teachers, children and subject leaders and monitoring of written work in conversation with pupils.

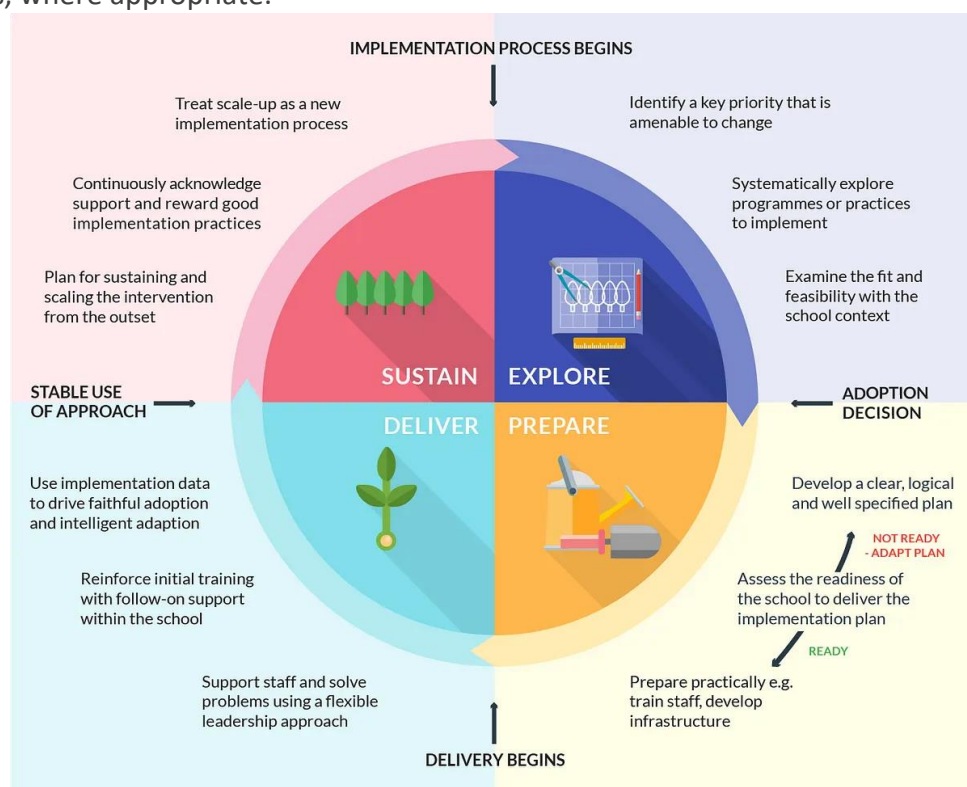
5. Knowledge is organised into subject disciplines and is derived from discourse within subject communities

This means that from KS1 we teach individual subjects such as History, Geography, Art, DT, Music and Computing. We treat each subject separately so that pupils have a very clear understanding of what is important about each subject and that their knowledge and skills progress systematically over time in each area of the curriculum. We are seeking to build connections with subject experts, secondary colleagues and subject associations to ensure that what we choose to include in our curriculum is the very best that it can be.

A bespoke professional development offer

‘High-quality teaching improves pupils outcomes and effective professional development offers a crucial tool to develop teaching quality and enhance children’s outcomes in the classroom.’
EEF – Effective Professional Development

At St Modwen’s Catholic Primary school, we want our staff to feel they are on an ongoing reflective journey of improvement within their practice. We recognise that a teacher’s subject knowledge, pedagogical understanding and access to effective strategies for assessment, feedback and behaviour management all have consequences in the classroom. As a result, we want to offer regular, supportive professional development opportunities to all classroom-based staff using both our in-house expertise and the expertise of external agencies, where appropriate.



Using the EEF’s ‘Foundations for implementation’ as an inspiration, we have developed our own process for implementing curriculum change. We listened to the concerns of staff and have developed our own model that is mindful of unmanageable changes to staff workload, the need to gain a true understanding of the current context before making changes and crucially, our model ensures that we build a secure evidence base before implementing change.

The St Modwen's model for implementing curriculum change

Spot an area of improvement. (Be mindful we can't change everything at once)

Talk to others. (Is it is a shared problem?)

Monitor and baseline (Get some context)

Organise a small-scale sustained trial (Build an in-house evidence base)

Doors open to external views/monitoring of progress

(Work with MAC as well as in-house)

Whole school discussion (present evidence and argue the case)

Evaluate and consult again (Are we missing something?)

Navigate a rollout plan (Timeframe/location of change/who will be involved?)

Supervise and support (Is the change going some way to solve the problem?)

Our staff team is divided into curriculum teams which offer rich, strategic discussion opportunities around areas of the curriculum and their links to one another. We aim to empower all staff to be able to articulate not just the details around their subject's curriculum design but also how it fits into the wider school curriculum context. To ensure connections can be made clearly within a child's schema, we are mapping out the horizontal, vertical and diagonal links across our curriculum and working to make these connections as clearly signposted as possible through the delivery of our units of work.