



SPARKLE MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

ORCHARDS INFANT SCHOOL
&
ORCHARDS JUNIOR SCHOOL

POLICY FOR
CURRICULUM

REVIEWED SEPTEMBER 2026

Curriculum Statement

Intent

Our school ethos 'Belong, Believe, Blossom', linked with the Academy motto SPARKLE are at the heart of our curriculum design. Learning is a change to long-term memory therefore our intent is to ensure that our students experience a wide breadth of study and have, by the end of key stage 2, long-term memory of an ambitious body of substantive and disciplinary knowledge.

Implementation

Curriculum drivers such as culture, sport, democracy, community, mindfulness, independence and ambition shape our curriculum breadth. They are derived from an exploration of the backgrounds of our students, our beliefs about high quality education and our values. They are used to ensure that subject planners give our students appropriate and ambitious curriculum opportunities.

An emphasis on cultural capital gives our students the vital background knowledge required to be informed and thoughtful members of our community who understand and believe in British values. Curriculum breadth is shaped by our curriculum drivers, cultural capital, subject topics and our ambition for students to achieve to the highest standard possible.

Our curriculum distinguishes between subject topics and skills progression. Subject topics are the specific aspects of subjects that are studied. Skills progression ties together the subject topics into meaningful schema. The same concepts/skills are explored and developed in a wide breadth of topics. Through this 'forwards-and-backwards engineering' of the curriculum and retrieval of information, students return to the same concepts over and over and gradually build understanding of them.

Procedural, disciplinary and semantic knowledge gained through the 'milestones' of skills progression give students the ability to develop their understanding of curriculum subjects. Knowledge organisers in some subjects help children to relate each topic to previously studied topics.

Cognitive science tells us that working memory is limited and that cognitive load is too high if students are rushed through content. This limits the acquisition of long-term memory. Cognitive science also tells us that in order for students to become creative thinkers, or have a greater depth of understanding they must first master the basics, which can take time.

Impact

As learning is a change to long-term memory it is impossible to see impact in the short term. We do however use formative and summative assessment based on deliberate practise. This means that we look at the practices taking place to determine whether they are appropriate, related to our goals and likely to produce results in the long-run. We use comparative judgement in two ways: in the tasks we set and in comparing a student's work over time. We use lesson observations to see if the pedagogical style matches our depth expectations.