

West Exmoor Federation



General Curriculum Policy

January 2007

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General Curriculum Policy

The general principle governing the curriculum of the West Exmoor Federation is that every child, within the Christian context of a Church School, shall be provided with a curriculum which is broad and balanced and which:

- Develops the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of children at the school;
- prepares the children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of secondary education and leading on into adult life.

The West Exmoor Federation will aim to provide for all children access to the eight areas of experience:

1. Aesthetic and Creative;
2. Ethical - values and relationships;
3. Linguistic - four dimensions of language, listening, reading, speaking and writing;
4. Mathematical - numerical, spatial, scientific and practical;
5. Physical - co-ordination of mind and body;
6. Scientific - observation, enquiry, technology, environment;
7. Social and political - society and its institutions;
8. Spiritual - values of school, society and religion.

Our articulated curriculum should answer four basic questions both within each curriculum area and across the curriculum:

1. Why? - aims and policy;
2. What? - guidelines, schemes of work, curriculum policies;
3. How? - teaching and learning methods and processes;
4. Whether? - evaluation.

Schemes of Work should satisfy tests of breadth, balance, coherence, relevance, differentiation and progression in accordance with the principles underlying the National Curriculum. They should incorporate elements which contribute to assessment and comparison over time thereby providing:

- information which teachers can use in deciding how a child's learning can be taken forward and in giving the children themselves clear and understandable targets and feedback about their achievements;
- teachers and others with the means of identifying the need for further diagnostic assessments for particular children where appropriate to help their education development;
- overall evidence of the achievements of a child and of what he or she knows, understands and can do;
- aggregated information about children's achievements which can be used as an indicator of where there needs to be further effort, resources, changes in the curriculum etc. ;
- helpful communication with parents about how their child is doing; and with Governors, Devon LEA and the wider community about the achievements of the school;

- a basis for professional development, in that the process of carrying out systematic assessment, recording attainment, and moderating the outcomes in discussion with other teachers in the school will be a valuable basis for teachers to evaluate their own work and gain access to new thinking.

Schemes of Work should take into account the continuous nature of education, having regard to the experiences the children will have had before entering the school, and those anticipated after they leave. Liaison with pre-school and Ilfracombe College is an important factor in curriculum design.

The West Exmoor Federation seeks to meet the needs, specifically, of its children. It will endeavour to provide a positive, caring environment in which the children are made to feel good about themselves. Establishing a good rapport with children, building their confidence, encouraging them to express individual ideas, examining established values leading to a greater understanding are at least as important as teaching the academic curriculum. Lynton School is responsible not only for the physical safety and well-being of the children, but also for their psychological safety and well-being. We must encourage the child's self-confidence and self-esteem. This is vital for learning, for all children. When the child's own image of self is counter-productive, when he regards himself as a failure and feels that others do too, the child will be unhappy with himself and will not learn. The image is thus self-reinforcing. Image building is thus a vital part of the school's work. Activities such as praising the children, displaying their work, helping them take part in assemblies, plays, sports and other activities are all part of this. It must also be remembered that those whose work and behaviour is less good may be the ones in most need of support and reinforcement. Teachers have the challenge of ensuring that all children are helped to develop self-confidence and self-esteem. The more able have many successes on which to build, and the school seeks to provide for the particular needs of these children. Those who find the formal curriculum difficult are not to be denied opportunities for personal development either. If the demands made on a child threaten to lessen self-confidence and self-esteem, then it may be time to alter the demands being made. It is vital that learning is seen as essentially useful and enjoyable. It is an important tool for life and if children learn to enjoy it when young, this will stay with them.

Children need to be literate and numerate, and the federation recognises the need for clear guidelines for the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science. The content of the remainder of the curriculum as stated for the Foundation subjects (modern language excepted) is important not just in its own right but it too may be a vehicle for establishing learning skills. What the children need to know is how to find out. They need the skills of original research, to be able to formulate hypotheses through empirical methods and reach their own conclusions. These aims have considerable curricular implications. These will be made explicit in the guidelines for Foundation subjects.

The teacher, while needing to be informed and knowledgeable as a person, need not be the fount of all knowledge, but rather a guide to the child's own resources, enabling each one to realise his own potential for original thought and synthesis. At the end of the day, it is what children carry out of school with them in their heads that is important, not how much they have written in books etc., although written work may have been a valuable tool in achieving that end result.

Within this broad policy, distinct aims and particular policies emerge. The school aims that each child shall learn:

- to read fluently, with understanding, feeling, discrimination and enjoyment a variety of materials written in different ways for different purposes;
- to write legibly and with a satisfactory standard of spelling, syntax, punctuation and usage;
- to communicate clearly and confidently in speech and writing, in ways appropriate for various

occasions and purposes;

- to listen attentively and with understanding;
- to acquire information from various sources, and to record information and findings in various ways;
- to apply computational skills with speed and accuracy;
- to understand mathematical language and concepts in order to be aware of the applications of mathematics in the world and to develop analytical and logical ways of thought;
- to observe living and inanimate things and thereby, through a process of observation, discrimination and classification recognise characteristics such as pattern and order;
- to master basic scientific ideas and methods and to extend understanding through a process of enquiry and experiment;
- to develop awareness of self and sensitivity to others, acquiring a set of moral values and the confidence to make and hold valid moral judgements, distinguishing fact from opinion, be aware of gender and multi-cultural issues, recognising prejudice, bias and superstition and to develop habits of self discipline and acceptable behaviour;
- to know about geographical, historical and social aspects of his wider environment and the national heritage and culture, to be aware of other times, places, cultures, religions and races and to recognise links between local, national and international events and their importance for him as an individual within society, to be aware of Christian beliefs and their importance in shaping our current society;
- to be able to use various art forms, craft and design skills as means of expression using a variety of materials and methods demanding a range of manipulative and technological skills and to extend their skills in these areas, to be aware of art and design in the environment both past and present;
- to develop agility and physical co-ordination, confidence in and through appropriate physical activity, the ability to express feeling through movement, drama and dance, to swim, where possible to spend some time in a physically challenging outdoor environment, to develop an understanding of the body, its workings and the changes associated with adolescence and their implications, the requirements of good health and nutrition; to be aware of the effect on health of solvent abuse, smoking, alcohol and drugs;
- to appreciate music by experiencing it through listening, performing and composing, through practical means, thereby leading to an understanding of the structure and sounds of music, and where possible to learn proficiency with one or more musical instruments, to be aware of and value great music of past and present and develop a critical sense with regard to music;
- to understand the value of achieving happiness for himself and others and that both may be achieved by contributing to society and others.

This general curriculum policy should be read in conjunction with the various National Curriculum requirements for each subject area and individual curriculum policies.

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