

Bewcastle Primary School



Curriculum & assessment policy

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Author: Governing body

Approved by governors on:

Signed:

Review date:	Amendments made:	Reviewed by:
Oct 2018	Outdoor learning updated	M. Thorpe
Dec 2020	Updated	L W Smith
Oct 2021	Updated	C. Murray



Introduction

Bewcastle Primary school is a unique and distinctive school. We are situated in a rural environment close to the Scottish border, which offers us a wealth of opportunities for learning outside and making the most of our fantastic local environment. As a result, outdoor learning is one of the main drivers of our curriculum. Our ethos is to encourage our children to be independent thinkers, enthusiastic learners and responsible citizens, with a global outlook and an excitement about the world around them. Our curriculum reflects this approach, with the aim of equipping our children with resilience, understanding of the world and the skills to develop as lifelong learners. The whole school curriculum is organised into half-termly topics, each with a different subject focus. These are part of a four-year rolling programme, to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum (2014). Within each topic, children are taught core skills and knowledge and given opportunities to develop their questioning and thinking. The aim is for a cross-curricular approach to learning, where key skills in mathematics and English can be practised, improved and applied across the whole range of subject areas.

Subjects taught at Bewcastle Primary School are:

English, Maths, Science, Geography, History, Music, Art, Design and Technology, P.E., Computing, R.E., PSHE and French.

Outdoor learning

Outdoor learning is a key component of our curriculum. Every other year, we undertake an ambitious project with our KS2 children either to walk the entire route of Hadrian's wall during an academic year or to walk the length of the Cumbrian Way. These projects are planned with Cumbria Outdoors and the aim is to give our children a deeper understanding of their local area, particularly in terms of its Geography and History, while at the same time developing their resilience and physical fitness.

Alongside these projects for our older children, the Early Years and KS1 children go to forest school, exploring local woodland with an expert forest school leader and developing their own knowledge and understanding of the world in a practical and experiential way.

Early Years

Our Nursery and Reception setting is organised to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. Our creative curriculum encourages play, developing children's intellectual enquiry and love of learning, through their understanding of the world around them. We have a strong partnership with parents and each child has a key worker who helps them to settle quickly into a nurturing, safe environment. There are daily opportunities to take part in whole school activities, such as singing, assembly time, registration and story and, after a half-term of induction, children can stay for lunch. Children in the Early Years work in a classroom with KS1 children and sometimes with KS2 children. This offers many benefits in terms of seeing the older children as role models for learning and behaviour.



Mathematics

Our key aim in mathematics is to develop an enjoyment of number, pattern, investigation and problem-solving. We use the national curriculum programme of study and the White Rose Maths planning units and materials. Teaching is targeted for each individual child and questioning is used to develop and deepen children's learning. Children are taught in mixed-ability and mixed-age groups, enabling them to develop their higher-level thinking and learn without boundaries.

Mathematics is assessed termly using WRH tests, which enable us to make a judgement about each child's progress. This is assessed against the end of year expectations and children are either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. Children are assessed where they are in their learning and not according to their chronological age, to ensure that gaps in learning are addressed, and knowledge and understanding are fully embedded.

English

English is taught daily in mixed-age, mixed-ability groups. Work is planned to support our cross-curricular topics and using particular stories to engage the children's interest. Reading and writing activities are based around books as well as further work in art, music, dance, computing, science, design and technology, history, geography and R.E.

Reading

At Bewcastle school, we have daily reading sessions, which enable all children to have quiet reading, story time, independent reading, paired reading, reading with an adult one-to-one, guided reading and phonics teaching across the week. We also ensure that every day at 3.00pm we sit down for a whole school story and poetry time. Children also listen to stories in regular assemblies, across a wide range of topics. All children are encouraged to read daily at home and have reading record books to monitor this. We take part in 'World Book Day' every year and have a well-stocked and attractive library which all children are encouraged to use regularly. We enjoy the termly visits of the library van, which enables us to seek advice from experts and enjoy time browsing. We also take advantage of the termly 'topic boxes' from the school library service, which enhance our school collection.

Reading comprehension skills are taught weekly and assessed half-termly using the 'Rising Stars' assessments. Teachers use a variety of resources and encourage children to develop their independent thinking skills to enable them to become fluent readers, with a love of books.

Phonics is taught using 'Letters and Sounds', enhanced with the teacher's own planning. EYFS and KS1 have daily phonics sessions each morning. Spelling is taught using the '5 times right' method, 'Look, say, cover, write, check', which is supported by daily practice at home. Spellings are matched to each child's ability and taken from the national curriculum and 'Letters and Sounds'. Spelling and handwriting are taught both explicitly and together. Teachers model cursive handwriting in their marking, lesson notes and displays.

Writing



Writing is taught across the curriculum, with an emphasis on topic-related work. From the Early Years, daily opportunities for 'mark-making' are given. Children are encouraged to develop cursive handwriting and practise handwriting and spelling together regularly, at least once a week. Teachers model the handwriting style in their written work. Children are encouraged to develop a fluent, individual style and to write with a handwriting pen when they are ready. Children are given many opportunities to write for a 'real' purpose, such as 'thank you' letters to visitors or stories for other children to read. Children are also encouraged to write labels for displays and to write the daily menu in the hall. Often a 'quick write' enables children to use music, pictures or objects as stimuli to write independently and imaginatively for fun! A 'Talk for writing' type approach is a key feature of our writing process, with oral rehearsal and re-telling of stories through story-mapping, drama and range of other teaching methods.

Writing is assessed formatively using our own assessment criteria grids and exemplars provided by the government and local authority. Teacher assessment is moderated through collaboration with our local cluster and consortium schools to ensure that it meets agreed standards.

Creative arts

At Bewcastle, we believe that the creative arts are vital to a child's learning. We seek different opportunities each year for taking part in music and dance with other schools. We regularly take part in 'U-Dance' at the Sands centre; performing with many other schools in a large public space is an amazing experience for our children. Music is also central to our teaching, with regular singing and a wide range of opportunities for performance.

Geography, History, RE, Art, Design and Technology, Computing and Science are all taught in a cross-curricular way, ensuring that key skills and concepts are learnt and children can make links between all areas of learning.

PE and sport

We focus on a different area of PE each term, which enables our children to experience all aspects of PE and sport. We also take part in local events such as sports days, Olympic and Commonwealth games and activities at our local secondary school, William Howard. We have taken part in the Lanercost cross country, Talkin Tarn cross country, Sands centre 5-a-side football, WHS 7-a-side football. We have our own swimming pool, with daily swimming in the summer term. Our expenditure of the PE sports premium is outlined on our website.

Special Needs (SENDCo: Jane Howard)

All children with special needs are fully integrated into the life of the school and take part in the whole curriculum. We invest in technical equipment and any other resources which are required to enable this full participation in school life.

Assessment

While we understand that national testing is important and ensure that our children are fully prepared to take part in statutory tests, we believe that assessment for learning is key to planning and delivering a relevant and interesting curriculum. We ensure that during each lesson,



opportunities for assessing our children's understanding are taken. We have a marking policy, written in consultation with the children, which is simple to understand and enables regular self-evaluation, with 'next steps' for learning. Assessments are all based on the curriculum. Termly tracking which is shared with governors and teachers ensure that assessment informs detailed, individual planning for each child. Regular pupil progress meetings between all members of staff enable close monitoring of children's progress and early identification of misconceptions can be dealt with, ensuring that all children are taught effectively.

GH January 2016

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