



'OPENING DOORS OF  
OPPORTUNITY TOGETHER'

# CURRICULUM POLICY

NOVEMBER 2022



## CURRICULUM POLICY

**Article 28 (Goals of Education):** Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free, and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

**(Rights Respecting Schools – UNICEF; The Convention on the Rights of the Child)**

### **Mission Statement**

***Meadow Bridge Primary School aims to foster a safe, happy, and caring environment where each child's personal development is nurtured. Every child's educational journey is enhanced and their lives enriched through stimulating learning experiences. Equal emphasis will be placed on pastoral care and on ensuring each individual reaches his or her academic potential, equipping them for the future.***

### **Curriculum Policy**

The Northern Ireland Educational Order (2006) sets out the minimum requirements that should be taught at each Key Stage.

Our aim is to provide a rich and varied curriculum, carefully designed to benefit the whole child. Within this broad, balanced curriculum, a focus on achieving appropriately high academic standards in Literacy and Numeracy will be maintained.

We also actively promote the development of knowledge, understanding, and skills, across the full range of primary school Areas of Learning. The content of our Areas of Learning complies with the current requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

Each child will follow Areas of Learning as set out in the Northern Ireland Curriculum for Foundation Stage (years 1-2), Key Stage 1 (years 3-4), and Key Stage 2 (years 5-7), the aim of which is "to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible choices throughout their lives".

### **Our broad aims are:**

- to arouse children's curiosity and foster a desire to learn about the world in which they live.
- for children to acquire knowledge, skills, and practical abilities, and the will to use them.
- to develop qualities of mind, body, spirit, feeling, and imagination.
- to appreciate human achievements in art, music, science, technology, literature, and sport.
- to help children understand the society and environment in which they live.
- to help children acquire and develop moral and religious values, and a respect for the beliefs and values held by others.
- to prepare for their adult lives at home, at work, at leisure and at large, as consumers and citizens.
- to develop a sense of self-respect, to develop the capacity to live as independent, self-motivated adults, and the ability to function as contributing members of co-operative groups - each child will move forward in all these ways according to age and ability.
- to provide a framework whereby parents are kept informed about the progress of their children through:
  - a) regular meetings where individual teachers meet individual/groups of parents.
  - b) a system of formal written reports from teachers to parents.
  - c) a knowledge among parents that teachers are accessible through the Principal.
- to continue the good working relationships between all Staff, the Board of Governors, Education Authority, DENI, our neighbouring schools, and with the community at large.

### **Specific objectives for our children are:**

- to read fluently and accurately, with understanding, feeling, and discrimination.
- to develop a legible style of handwriting and satisfactory standards 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 learn how 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 the applications of mathematical ideas in various situations in the home, classroom, school, and the local area.
- to observe living and inanimate things, and to recognise characteristics such as pattern and order.
- to master basic scientific and technological ideas.
- to investigate solutions and interpret evidence, to analyse and to solve problems.
- to develop awareness of self and sensitivity to others, acquire a set of moral values and the confidence to make and to hold moral judgements, and to develop habits of self-discipline and acceptable behaviour.
- to be aware of the geographical, historical, and social aspects of the local environment and the national heritage, and to be aware of other times and places.
- to acquire sufficient control of self, or tools, equipment, and instruments, to be able to use music, drama and several forms of arts and crafts as means of expression.
- to develop agility and physical co-ordination, confidence in and through physical activity, and the ability to express feeling through movement.
- to foster an interest and gain confidence in using Information and Communication Technology.
- to include any other subjects which may form part of a future curriculum.

## Areas of Learning

The curriculum for the three Stages is set out in six Areas of Learning. Although the Areas of Learning are set out separately, teachers should, where appropriate, integrate learning across the six Areas to make relevant connections for children. Teachers have considerable flexibility to select from within the Learning Areas, those aspects they consider appropriate to the ability and interests of their pupils.

### **The Areas are:**

- 1 Language and Literacy (including Talking and Listening, Reading and Writing; schools are also encouraged to teach additional languages).
- 2 Mathematics and Numeracy (focusing on the development of mathematical concepts and numeracy across the curriculum).
- 3 The Arts (including Art and Design, Drama and Music).
- 4 The World Around Us (focusing on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in Geography, History and Science and Technology).
- 5 Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (focusing on emotional development, social skills, learning to learn, health, relationships and sexuality education and mutual understanding in the local and global community).
- 6 Physical Education/Development and Movement (focusing on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding through play and a range of physical activities).

The Northern Ireland Curriculum sets out the minimum requirement that should be taught at each Key Stage. This will be followed and used as a starting point for teacher planning.

Religious Education is an important element of the school's life. The teaching of RE in each year-group is based on the core syllabus for Northern Ireland. It is Bible based, child centred, and of a non-denominational character.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE lessons and the act of collective worship and should inform the Principal in writing, of their wishes to exercise this right. The school takes great care to try to ensure that any children in this position are not made to feel excluded from the general life of the school.

### **Whole School Skills and Capabilities:**

In Meadow Bridge Primary School we place an emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and for operating in society. Within lessons we provide the opportunities to engage in active learning contexts across all areas of the curriculum and progressively develop:

#### **Cross-Curricular Skills:**

- Communication
- Using Mathematics
- Using information and Communication Technology

#### **Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities:**

- Thinking, problem-solving and decision-making
- Self-Management
- Working with others
- Managing Information
- Being creative

### **Breadth in the Curriculum**

Breadth in the curriculum will be achieved by ensuring children experience work in each of the areas of study and educational themes. It will also feature within a curricular area, for example, in Communication opportunities exist for talking and listening as well as for reading and writing. The structure of the NIC provides for breadth both within each curricular area and in areas that relate and complement one another (interconnected learning) so that knowledge, skills, concepts, and attitudes can be learned and developed right across the curriculum. Outdoor learning will be promoted throughout the school in all Areas of Learning as will practical activities which develop autonomy, problem solving and higher order thinking skills.

### **Balance in the Curriculum**

Balance in the curriculum will be achieved by making sure time is carefully managed to ensure that appropriate development of each area of study and the educational themes over the course of a school year.

Balance will also be sought in:

Teaching organisation: whole class, group, pair, and individual provision; and

Teaching approaches: between practical and theoretical work, and between knowledge and skills development, catering for the various learning styles and ensuring work is differentiated to cater for various needs.

### **Equity of Access:**

In Meadow Bridge Primary School, teachers are aware that pupils have different experiences, interests, and strengths, which will influence the way in which they learn.

In planning curriculum and assessment activities, teachers are aware of the requirements of the Equal Opportunities legislation and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SENDO) 2005 and have high expectations for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, pupils with disabilities, pupils from all social and cultural backgrounds, pupils of different ethnic groups including travellers and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Approaches to learning and teaching provide suitably challenging opportunities for all pupils to take part in lessons fully and effectively. They enable all pupils to achieve. For pupils with special educational needs, the staff take account of the type and extent of the difficulty experienced by the child. For those pupils whose attainments fall significantly below the levels expected at a particular Key Stage, degrees of differentiation of tasks and materials appropriate to the age and requirements of the pupil, will be provided. For pupils whose attainments significantly exceed the expected levels of attainment during a particular Key Stage, teachers plan suitably challenging work by extending the breadth and depth of study across the Areas of Learning.

Monitoring, assessing, and recording of work and progress provide useful information to assist in matching work to the needs of the children to ensure that they are suitably challenged or supported.

## Curriculum and Assessment

The pupils in Meadow Bridge Primary School continue to experience a wide range of learning activities in all of the subjects within the curriculum. A variety of teaching approaches is adopted, based on practical experience whenever possible, with children working in class, small group, and individual situations.

Teachers continue to monitor, evaluate, and review the teaching and learning cycle within their classroom.

In every classroom, in addition to the delivery of the curriculum, we endeavour to build self-confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of responsibility and a respect for the feelings of others.

Statutory assessment procedures are firmly in place with each child receiving an Annual Report, inclusive of levels at the end of Key Stages 1 & 2. The Year 7 pupils receive a Record of Achievement at their farewell assembly at the end of June.

Parents also have an opportunity to meet with their child's teacher on two formal occasions during the school year to discuss progress. Parents are encouraged to maintain contact with their child's teacher, and the Principal and Heads of Key Stages are happy to meet with parents who may have a concern about their child's progress or welfare.

### **Homework:**

Homework is an important element of the Home/School partnership. It gives parents the opportunity to support their children in their learning and enables them to support the work of the school.

## Partnership with Parents

We acknowledge that parents are children's first and most enduring educators, and that when parents and teachers work together, the results have a positive impact on children's learning. We encourage the support of our parents by:

- Showing respect and understanding for the role of the parent in their child's education.
- Listening to accounts of their child's development and any concerns they may have.
- Being flexible in arrangements for settling children into school.
- Making parents feel welcome and by being friendly and approachable.
- Inviting parents to Induction Meetings, Information Evenings, and school celebrations.
- Keeping parents informed and up-to-date about the curriculum.
- Use of Seesaw and Social Media to keep parents informed of what is taking place in school.
- Having welcoming display boards and photographs showing children's learning.
- Meeting with parents to discuss pupils' progress.
- Having parent representatives on our Board of Governors.

## **Monitoring & Evaluating the Curriculum**

Parents likewise are crucial stakeholders of our curriculum. Every year they are invited to participate in a curriculum meeting that looks at all aspects of their child's curriculum. Parents are also encouraged to play an active part in our innovations within Meadow Bridge's Curriculum.

The Governors have a legal responsibility to ensure pupils receive a quality curriculum. They are supported in this role by the school Principal. The Governors endeavour to monitor and evaluate a quality curriculum by:

- Engaging in a self-critical and data rich School Development Plan process.
- Every year every curricular team Co-Ordinator presents a written or/and oral report of the progress of their area of responsibility.
- Each year the Assessment Co-Ordinator will compile a School Data Report. This will evaluate the success of the school's work in Literacy and Numeracy.

The Principal and the SLT use the PRSD process as a vehicle to monitor the teaching of the curriculum. All teachers are formally observed twice per year. Opportunities are created for dissemination of good practice. Curricular Co-Ordinators will also have termly meetings with their teams. Part of their role is to monitor planners, teachers' evaluations, and samples of work/end of year data. Each teacher is professionally accountable for their practice. Our teachers are trained and encouraged to be self-critical. This process is aided by opportunities for dissemination of good practice within year-groups, key stages, and across the school.

### **Curriculum Complaints Procedure:**

In the event of a complaint concerning the curriculum, parents should in the first instance write to the Principal. The Principal, in liaison with the teacher, will seek to bring about a resolution of the matter. If such a resolution does not emerge, parents should write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. He/she will raise the matter at the next Governors' meeting. He/she will hand the matter to the Curriculum Complaints Tribunal Panel within the Board of Governors. They will arrange a hearing for the complaints and reach a decision on whether or not to uphold a complaint.