

Ipsley C of E Middle School Secondary rationale for curriculum design

At Ipsley, our aim is to improve the life chances of every pupil, and our community, through a broad, balanced, and ambitious curriculum. Our motivation is to develop ambitious and creative young people who can flourish in a changing world, fostering a life-long love of learning characterised by wisdom, courage, and kindness. Our curriculum vision is inclusive, well-designed, and coherently sequenced to establish a strong foundation for all our pupils. A love of reading is at the heart of our curriculum, with interdisciplinary literacy a key driver of curriculum development. Oracy is also an integral part of literacy; empowering pupils to articulate their knowledge, understanding and thinking. Knowledge acquisition is central to our vision, and we provide rich and varied contexts and opportunities for pupils to acquire disciplinary knowledge and then develop and apply this broad knowledge. Through our Christian distinctiveness, we nurture compassionate and kind young people who are inspired by following God's example of loving each other as He loves us.

This rationale explains the principles of how we have designed the curriculum for our pupils and how these principles underpin how we have selected the things we want them to learn.

Each subject within the curriculum has a further subject-specific rationale which demonstrates how schools have selected what they want pupils to learn in each subject and how the order has been arrived at so that pupils make progress in their learning. We have a three-year Key Stage 3 building on Key Stage 2 and leading into KS4 and 5.

Our overall curriculum design is underpinned by our vision for what the pupils in our communities need to thrive and become confident learners. Our curriculum offer identifies the **Knowledge, Skills, Attributes** and **Experiences** we seek to develop in our pupils. We see each component of KASE as an entitlement for pupils and KASE shapes the whole experience within our school. Our Subject Curriculum design is driven by the **Knowledge** aspect of KASE; developing **expert** subject knowledge alongside disciplinary skills to encourage critical thinkers who can **communicate** ideas and thoughts with clarity. Key to our curriculum vision is that pupils experience a wide range of cultural opportunities and materials within school and that pupils are encouraged to communicate and talk about their knowledge, thinking and learning.

Knowledge is the driver for our subject planning and the aim is to develop expertise by ensuring that pupils master, over time, the key substantive and conceptual knowledge within each subject discipline. We think of **knowledge** as consisting of:

- **Substantive knowledge** – the substance of each unit of learning and its associated vocabulary, connected through the subject to other units by substantive concepts – the “big ideas” of each subject.
- **Disciplinary knowledge** – the way in which the thinking in each subject develops as pupils build more substantive knowledge, what are commonly thought of as the ‘subject specific skills’ of each subject domain.

The design of the curriculum within each subject is characterised by the relationship between **substantive** and **disciplinary knowledge**, interwoven and built over time. Knowing more, remembering more, being able to do and demonstrate more is at the core of the sequencing. Making conceptual connections differs in each subject so each subject rationale makes explicit the order and sequence of how this knowledge will be learned and each school has detailed medium term and unit plans. Some subjects are more hierarchal Maths, Science, MFL, Music whereas others are cumulative such as History, Geography and Art.

We want pupils to know and understand more but also to explore and interrogate knowledge. We believe that, for our pupils, we need to design learning opportunities to promote key **attributes** which are associated with developing an appetite and a thirst for learning such as resilience. Pupils need to see models of how these attributes are key to higher achievement and pride in their work. As they gain more knowledge, they are changed by what they learn, and they grow more detailed and conceptual connections (“schemata”) within subject disciplines. For the same reason, we have identified a range of **skills** which are characteristics of effective learning. The **substantive** and **disciplinary knowledge** within each subject provides a framework for how pupils get better and make progress in that subject developing subject skills. These characteristics of effective learning are drivers of pedagogical design. We place particular emphasis on the development of exploratory talk and of reasoning to apply the substantive vocabulary pupils are learning in different subjects (fluency and communication).

Experiences of activities, visits to places and encounters with people provide stimulus for and models of how knowledge is gained. The design and planning of our curriculum makes explicit the weaving in of authentic **experiences** and wide range of rich ‘texts’ which give pupils the opportunities to see where knowledge and learning could take them and enables connections and links to be made.

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