

Castlehill Primary School - Curriculum Rationale

In Castlehill Primary School we have worked collaboratively to devise a curriculum which underpins our key values for learning and the development of the whole child. Our Curriculum Rationale is built upon the following components:

THE ETHOS AND LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Developing a positive ethos lays the foundations on which to build learning and teaching. Understanding and accepting difference is a key element of our work. Our curriculum offers a broad range of learning experiences, taking into account the needs and interests of our pupils. There is a mutual sense of trust and respect as well as shared values and aims.

Children's opinions and ideas are listened to and valued in class with regular learning conversations taking place. Through our School Groups which include Rights Respecting, Eco, Community, Health Promotion, Global issues, Voices of the Children, ICT & Jubilee groups, children have a strong voice setting their own agenda, leading developments and also working together to take different initiatives forward. This means children are encouraged to be involved in developing the work of the school and therefore have a positive impact on school improvements. School Groups lead our charity work which involves the whole school and develops the concept of giving.

School assemblies provide the focus for our work on building resilience, understanding about Rights and positive relationships - key cornerstones for success in life.

In Castlehill we value a strong sense of community across the three parts of the school: nursery, mainstream and language and communication resource. We actively engage with the wider community and value the contribution they can make to our learning e.g. parents, volunteers, local groups, Buchanan Lodge etc.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Through assemblies we share and celebrate achievements within and out with the school environment, sharing in each other's successes. These are displayed on our achievement wall and shared with parents, families and the wider community through Learning Journey folders & school award certificates. Through Learning Journeys, children are being encouraged to reflect on their progress and identify next steps in their learning, thus becoming independent and responsible learners.

The extensive range of clubs maximise opportunities for our pupils to actively engage in a wide variety of activities, encouraging the development of skills and knowledge in a wider context. These are run by staff, volunteers or in conjunction with Active Schools and local organisations. Children have the opportunity to take part in Junior Awards Scheme for Schools in P6 & P7. Primary 7 pupils have the opportunity to develop relationships with P7 pupils in St. Andrew's through joint working and a shared residential experience.

Children are given a variety of opportunities which foster the development of important life skills through e.g. buddying, family leaders, peer mediators, cookery and shopping.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Schools have a responsibility to provide children with a Broad General Education from pre-school to S3. At Castlehill Primary we use well planned programmes of study, with a developing focus on assessment using Progression Framework Learning Statements, to ensure coverage of the Experiences & Outcomes across all 8 curricular areas while allowing flexibility to cater for pupils' needs and interests. For some pupils a highly individualised programme meets their needs and ensures engagement with learning e.g. Lego therapy.

Our curriculum aims to foster the development of key skills in communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, enquiry, investigation and analysis as well as social and personal awareness and interaction. In particular, it places key emphasis on the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. These skills and attributes will provide our pupils with a sound basis for their development as lifelong learners enabling them to reach their full potential.

Skills are developed through an 'I can' approach across all year groups with the delivery of Experiences and Outcomes. The development of skills is essential to learning and supports our pupils to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

At the heart of our curriculum is high quality learning and teaching. A variety of teaching methodologies and strategies are implemented by all school staff. Approaches are designed to actively engage our pupils in their learning e.g. in the LCR. Methodologies are varied and pupil-centred and include opportunities for individual and cooperative group work, text-based and practical work, educational visits and visiting speakers, outdoor learning and the use of ICT to support learning.

Throughout the school, children develop their ability to self and peer assess. A suite of assessments are used to support teachers' professional judgement about pupil progress. Standardised, periodic, diagnostic and ongoing assessments are all part of our practice.

The Design Principles are taken into account to ensure our curriculum offers challenge and enjoyment, personalisation and choice, coherence, relevance, breadth and depth for all our learners. Children are also involved in planning their own learning experiences, enhancing the depth and breadth of our curriculum. Active learning is encouraged at all stages, both inside our classrooms and using our excellent outdoor environment.

School improvement is a key driver. Staff and pupils are involved in evaluating our work. Teachers engage in moderation activities, cluster and associated school working, peer visits and professional enquiry to support curriculum development. There is a programme of learning visits and conversations in place led by the school leadership team involving staff and pupils.

INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING

Opportunities for Interdisciplinary learning (IDL) are planned, where meaningful links are made between different curricular areas. This enhances the teaching and learning experiences for our learners, ensuring transfer of skills and knowledge. We believe an IDL approach brings about rich rewards, allowing for increased and improved collaboration and leading to exciting and challenging opportunities for our pupils to make connections across subject areas. In Castlehill Primary IDL opportunities are being actively planned across various curricular areas to provide a skills based progressive programme across the school.

OUR CURRICULUM

STRENGTHS:

- ✓ Provides a broad general education which covers the Experiences and Outcomes in all curricular areas.
- ✓ Is based on progressive skills-based programmes of study being developed in each curricular area.
- ✓ Has a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing with all staff having a responsibility to develop, reinforce and extend learning in these areas.
- ✓ Provides opportunities for meaningful IDL which is skills and interest-based, coherent and relevant.
- ✓ Allows learning to be organised with flexibility to support personalisation, choice and learning styles.
- ✓ Allows pupils to contribute to the ethos and life of the school community.
- ✓ Provides opportunities for personal achievement and supports all learners in developing skills for learning, life and work.

NEXT STEPS:

- ✓ To continue to develop meaningful IDL approaches which include the cross-cutting themes.
- ✓ To develop our progressive programme of study in Literacy, Health & Well-being & RME.
- ✓ To review impact of Numeracy hub working.
- ✓ To ensure curriculum planning reflects significant aspects of learning and progression frameworks.

| OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ETHOS & LIFE AS A SCHOOL COMMUNITY (Effective Contributors/Responsible Citizens) | OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT (Confident Individuals) |
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| <p>This includes opportunities to participate responsibly in decision-making, to contribute as leaders and role models, offering support and service to others and playing an active part in putting the values of the school community into practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Bounceback assemblies ❖ School Group memberships ❖ Eco work/litter picks/sustainability projects ❖ Rights Respecting work - in school, the community and wider world ❖ Participation in Pupil Learning Conversations ❖ JRSO representatives ❖ Charity work- Poppy Scotland, Mary's Meals, Children in Need etc ❖ Working to support our local community - organising fund raisers, coffee mornings, charitable giving, Community Christmas concert, visits to Buchanan Lodge ❖ Celebrating languages & cultures from within our school community & around the world ❖ Family Time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Class/special assemblies take a child led approach plus yearly Christmas Show/Nativity ❖ Celebrating personal achievements with the wider community through assemblies. ❖ Achievement/ Good Work Walls (whole school and class) ❖ Achievement Awards - Praise postcards, Well Done etc. ❖ School Group membership e.g. Eco-Committee, Health Group ❖ School buddies, monitors, peer mediators, Family Leaders ❖ JASS - Junior Awards Scheme for Schools ❖ Performance opportunities - Sports tournaments e.g. tennis, rugby and football; Music - EDC Choir/Orchestra; Competitions e.g. art, writing, quiz and dance ❖ Risk taking, working collaboratively, promoting a positive response towards personal well-being ❖ Enterprise activities ❖ Cycle Training - Bikeability |