

Our Big Question Curriculum

Our Big Questions help the children to see how all aspects of their learning are connected: geography and art, literacy and technology, history and science.

Through investigative learning (enquiry-based) and practice, we show the children how to apply their transferrable skills in all curriculum areas. It is our intention that this will ensure long term memory and application of skills.

Our termly topics are organised into 'home' and 'away' themes, encouraging children to explore how they fit into the wider world.

Enquiry Curriculum

The statutory National Curriculum for the majority of foundation subjects is taught through a thematic and engaging cross-curricular approach. Each theme takes a main subject to drive the learning forward. We believe

that choosing the right context to engage our children in their learning is vital in fostering a love of learning and also maintaining our high standards.

Why take an enquiry based approach to learning?

- It is planned around the distinctive needs the children.
- It promotes curiosity.
- It has a clear outcome, designed to raise standards.
- It gives a real context for the application of basic skills.
- It allows writing to be meaningfully embedded.
- It is interesting for the teacher as well as the children.
- It integrates empowering learning (learn to learn).
- It is underpinned by leading research about quality learning and brain-based learning.

How enquiry based learning works: The learning journey is explicitly shared with children in order to ensure they connect to the big picture of their learning, i.e. knowing what to expect. Each class has an Enquiry Working Wall display that includes a representation of the learning journey, which is referred to and added to as the unit of work progresses.

Hook into learning: Teachers provide an initial stimulus experience that helps children connect with the content and skills of the unit of work. These can take many forms, e.g. a visit from a Roman soldier, finding a message in a bottle, a video diary excerpt, strange foot prints on the classroom ceiling etc. etc.

Pupil Voice: Active planning input from the children is integral to enquiry based learning; we want the children to feel that they are able to drive part of their learning journey. This is essential to ensure that the curriculum meets the ongoing varied needs and interests of the children. Pupil voice is used throughout the unit of work to steer learning by asking children to pose questions that they want to know more about, these are known as 'umbrella questions'. Teachers refer to children's questions throughout the unit of work so that children can see that their contributions are valued and their questions drive their learning.

Outcome: Each unit of work has an agreed outcome that is shared with the children and may be negotiated with the children. e.g. art exhibition, powerpoint presentation, class debate etc etc.

Relection Activity ~ Review & Celebration of Learning: At the end of each unit of work there is a reflection and evaluation of learning. This focuses on what has been learnt and how it has been learnt; we want the children to become reflective learners. Paper evidence of this can be seen on the title page of each theme – children re-visit the page. Parents and carers are invited to share learning reflection activities with their children and this has replaced the more traditional 'show and tell' type class activity.

Planning for Enquiry based Learning: Enquiry teaching covers the History, Geography, Art, DT, Music, Science requirements of the curriculum, making links with other subjects where these can be meaningful. There is discrete teaching of some elements of English, Maths, RE, Computing, PE and PSHE appropriate to the specific year group.

'ENQUIRY' thematic planning is over a 3 year cycle so that year groups can work together on the same theme.