

Building the Curriculum At Bankton Primary School



Strategy Paper 1 Curriculum Rationale

Introduction

The Bankton Learning Community

Bankton Primary School is a school in the heart of the community of Dedridge in Livingston, West Lothian. The catchment area covers part of Dedridge and Adambrae. Bankton Primary is included in West Lothian Council Decile Band 5 due to the school's free meal equivalent. Parts of Dedridge have well established extended families and many of the parents attended Bankton Primary themselves, so there is a strong and healthy affiliation and attachment to the school.

Dedridge is an area of Livingston where there is a real sense of ecological responsibility and care for the environment. Staff and pupils from the school are actively involved in the DEEP Group (Dedridge Ecological and Environmental Project Group). There are also strong links with West Lothian College and all schools within the James Young Cluster. All of these factors must be given cognisance when building a curriculum which is relevant to the needs of our pupils living in their community in the 21st Century.

The main drivers of the Bankton Curriculum Rationale are:

Getting It Right for Every Child

Raising Attainment

Health and Wellbeing

Across all stages of the school there are children with significant additional support needs. We aim to support these pupils and their families through focused observation, early intervention and targeted support. Strong partnerships will be established from the earliest stages in Nursery to ensure that parents are clear about their supportive role in their child's education. Parents at all stages will be supported to help their child through 'bite-size' tutorials and workshops on specific aspects of Literacy and Numeracy to enable them to play an important part in raising attainment for all.

Getting It Right for Every Child means that our curriculum is deeply rooted in the wellbeing indicators ensuring every Bankton pupil feels:

SAFE HEALTHY ACTIVE NURTURED ACHIEVING RESPECTED RESPONSIBLE & INCLUDED

Each one of these wellbeing indicators is important to the lives of our children. These are embedded in classroom practice and are visual messages around the school. Positive relationships are at the heart of our Curriculum Rationale and emotional wellbeing of pupils and staff, combined with mutual respect, are major priorities.

All pupils within Bankton will be valued by staff, receiving focused regular feedback on all aspects of their learning experiences. Regular learner conversations will increase pupils' knowledge and confidence about **what really matters in their learning (*The Significant Aspects of Learning*)** They will have access to a curriculum which is relevant to their needs and the needs of their community; a curriculum which embraces active learning approaches, collaborative working in teams, opportunities for personalisation and choice, digital literacy and relevant home learning. This curriculum will also be rooted in the design principles of Curriculum for Excellence.

Views of Pupils, Staff and Parents have helped to shape this Curriculum Rationale. The Rationale is reviewed annually as part of the school improvement planning process.

Curriculum Consultation Process

All stakeholders were involved in a consultation process. Staff participated in a collaborative group activity to discuss and reflect on key questions which will help to shape the curriculum in Bankton.

Together we considered:

- What are we teaching in Bankton? Why?
- What are the unique needs of Bankton learners and how can we meet these through the curriculum?
- How well does the curriculum develop the four capacities in our children? How can we evidence this through the profiling process?
- How well do we design the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners including those with additional support needs?
- How well does our curriculum address the four contexts for learning?
- How has your classroom changed through Curriculum for Excellence? How does it look / feel / sound different
- Which of the curriculum design principles can you evidence in your classroom? Which are more difficult?

Through this robust evaluation of our curriculum staff shared their ideas through valuable professional dialogue.

They identified many existing strengths in the curriculum:

- Progressive skills-based curriculum rooted in Experiences and Outcomes
- Transferrable skills across the curriculum
- Developing a strong sense of responsibility for the environment
- Balance of teaching and learning approaches to ensure active engagement of all learners
- Confidence building from the earliest stages

They also identified next steps for development to shape our curriculum rationale for Bankton's learners:

- Social skills development with a major focus on Talking, Listening and advanced group skills
- ICT skills and digital literacy development
- Further development of positive actions and attitudes in Health and Wellbeing including building resilience
- Greater breadth and depth in learning in Social Studies and Science
- Development of transferable skills in Technologies
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WHAT DO WE TEACH IN BANKTON?

Pupils want a curriculum which:

- Fills them with self belief
- Gives them positive feedback on their learning
- Gives them skills for work
- Helps them use their creative ideas
- Teaches them about the environment
- Helps them develop friendships and be happy
- Teaches them communication and 'people skills'

WHY DO WE TEACH IT?

Staff want a curriculum which:

- Develops children's personal and interpersonal skills through a strong focus on the four capacities
- Gives them transferable skills for life, learning and work
- Provides rich learning within challenge and problem solving contexts
- Is relevant to their day-to-day lives
- Supports and challenges them in their learning
- Provides opportunities for personalisation and choice
- Meets the needs of all through specific and targeted support and challenge

Parents want a curriculum for their child which:

- Helps them grow in confidence, use their own initiative and develop their thinking skills.
- Gives them a variety of active learning structures
- Teaches them skills which are relevant to the lives they lead
- Gives them an awareness of the wider world
- Allows them to express themselves creatively
- Ensures they can socialise, engage and interact with others
- Teaches them respect and tolerance for others
- Helps them to grow and develop as a well rounded person through praise and celebration of success
- Prepares them for life

The Bankton Curriculum

Our curriculum in Bankton is skills based from the earliest stages in nursery. There are frameworks and pathways in place which allow pupils to develop progressive skills which build on their prior learning. These frameworks inform breadth and depth of learning for all pupils and ensure that their skills are developed through appropriate pace and challenge. The curriculum is deeply rooted in the experiences and outcomes which are designed to prepare children for learning, life and work. Across all areas of the curriculum there is a strong focus on the development of language, communication and social skills which build confidence in pupils' interactions with others, now and in the work places of the future. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all learners, to develop a positive 'can do' attitude in all, giving a feeling of success and ensuring all pupils achieve their full potential. Pupils in Bankton Primary School will experience rich learning in a variety of contexts which will ensure that they develop a true understanding and informed attitudes of the world in which they live.

The curriculum is flexible in structure, delivering experiences and outcomes in a variety of different ways. Children across all stages experience learning within vertical groupings, developing their social, emotional, physical and intellectual skills through co-operating with each other. They have opportunities for personalisation and choice in how they achieve a learning outcome by what they say, write, make or do as a response to their learning.

Learning takes place within active approaches, using ICT, games and individual, paired and group work. Collaboration allows pupils a meaningful learning forum for critical thinking, problem solving and enquiry.

Pupils have opportunities to show they can apply their skills in new and unfamiliar contexts. This truly demonstrates the **depth** of their learning.

Learning and Teaching

The curriculum in Bankton is delivered within the highest quality learning and teaching. Teachers utilise a wide variety of teaching methodologies to engage all learners and adopt a range of strategies to meet their needs.

The learning structures allow all children to work in a variety of different ways – as individuals /pairs / groups or as a whole class, as appropriate to the learning context. Pupils help to inform how and what they will learn and are encouraged to respond to their learning through planned personalisation and choice.

Technologies are deeply embedded in learning and teaching across the curriculum and pupils are encouraged to engage with and develop their skills in ICT, becoming as independent as possible in their learning.

Total engagement of learners is the main priority in all classes. Teachers constantly reflect, evaluate and set next steps in learning which achieve this objective.

The professional development of staff is achieved through collegiate and collaborative practices linked to whole school and personal improvement plans identified through the Professional Update process. Impact on learners is central to all professional development.

The Design Principles

What do the Design Principles look like in Bankton classrooms?

Challenge and Enjoyment:

Children find their learning experiences engaging, challenging and motivating. Learning within all curricular areas encourages high expectations and aspiration for all. Pupils are involved in planning the learning. Learning experiences include problem solving and enquiry.

Breadth:

All pupils have opportunities for a broad balanced range of learning experiences. Learning takes place in a variety of contexts, both in class, outdoors and in the wider environment. The breadth of the curriculum ensures pupils mature into well rounded individuals, through the systematic development of the 4 capacities. Pupils develop key skills across the broad curriculum for learning, life and work.

Progression :

There are skills frameworks in place which ensure the progressive development of skills from 3 – 18. Pupils build on prior knowledge and achievements to provide a continuum of experiences. Pupils receive quality feedback from their teachers which informs their next steps in learning. Quality assessment information and learner conversations during the profiling process ensure that interventions are in place for those who need them.

Depth:

There are opportunities at all stages for pupils to develop their full capacity for different types of thinking and learning. Using a range of co-operative strategies they develop diversity of thinking and solve problems creatively. They pull together different strands of learning to make positive connections and achieve more advanced levels of understanding. Pupils are actively involved in creating their own success criteria and have opportunities to apply their learning in new and unfamiliar ways.

Personalisation and Choice:

The Bankton Curriculum responds to individual children's needs, and supports particular aptitudes and talents. Through dialogue between pupils and teachers, pupils are given regular opportunities to respond to learning in a variety of different ways, by what they write, say, make or do. Pupils are actively involved in the planning process, particularly during topic planning to ensure the learning is relevant and motivating.

Coherence:

There are clear links for pupils between different aspects of their learning to provide a truly coherent learning experience for all. Pupils are encouraged to see skills development as 'transferable' to a range of learning situations. Through interdisciplinary learning contexts pupils have opportunities to develop learning connections and pathways.

Relevance:

Through shared learning intentions and success criteria pupils see the relevance of their learning to real life contexts, now and in the future. Business links and enterprise opportunities help sustain skills for learning life and work. Pupils are constantly encouraged to ask why they are learning particular knowledge and skills and relate these to the life they lead. Teachers regularly evaluate the learning for the impact this may have on pupils' lives. To that end, the Curriculum Rationale is regularly evaluated as part of the improvement planning process.

Curriculum Pathways – the Bankton Learning Journey



Curriculum Pathways, which focus on progressive skills are used across the curriculum. These pathways have assessment of *Significant Aspects of Learning* in Literacy, Numeracy and H&WB built in, so that teachers have a clear and validated assessment profile for each child, ensuring positive progression on their learning journey. Teachers at all stages work collaboratively to engage with and modify these pathways to ensure they are constantly meeting learners' needs.

The skills progression pathways clearly outline learners' experiences within each outcome and ensure breadth and depth of learning, within and across a level.

Developing the skills and attributes of a well-rounded citizen of the future

The Bankton curriculum aims to develop skills for life, work and learning which will prepare our pupils to take their place confidently in society. Within all 4 Contexts for learning pupils are provided with varied opportunities to develop the 4 Capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. We aim to develop **Successful Learners** who use higher order thinking skills, are reflective and resilient in their learning and have a 'growth mindset'. Through a range of performance opportunities our pupils gradually increase in self-confidence and self-belief showcasing their skills development as **Confident Individuals**. With progressive learning and social skills development within our whole school, 'Ready, Steady, Go,' Programme our pupils become more resilient, respectful and ready to learn ensuring they become **Effective Contributors** within their varied learning environments, both in and out of school. Through outdoor learning, the Market Garden, the willow project and targeted local environmental projects such as the Confluence Planting and the DEEP Group our pupils are well prepared through the ECO agenda embedded in our curriculum to become **Responsible Citizens** in Scotland's future.

We are ever mindful to review our Rationale regularly and to adapt our curricular priorities to meet the particular needs of cohorts of pupils throughout the school. By taking this flexible approach we are true to the main driver within our Rationale:

GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD

Curriculum for a Learning Community

The Bankton Curriculum meets the needs of learners within our school context but does not operate in isolation. Curricular collaboration is vital within the James Young Cluster of schools to ensure appropriate progression and smooth curricular transitions. It is also important for us to look outwards and collaborate with other professionals and establishments within West Lothian and beyond to effect continuous improvement in the curriculum for all learners.

Curricular business links and outdoor learning opportunities are vital to provide rich contextualised learning relevant to pupils' skills development.

At all times we must seek the views of all stakeholders to ensure we are providing relevant and coherent programmes which are preparing Bankton's learners to become Scotland's citizens of the future.



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