

## The Topsham School Curriculum

It is important to note that this document is a working document and as such is subject to change. Since Jan 2018 we have been working on reviewing and reforming our curriculum to reflect our Vision, Values and Mission Statement. We are very much in the infancy of this work but are all very excited about what we are creating and have already seen green shoots of the quality outcomes for children that our revised way of working could lead to. Laid out below is information of our Curriculum Intent, Implementation, and Impact. We have not achieved everything written here yet but we have high aspirations!

### Curriculum Intent: What we want our children to know and to be able to do

The Topsham School believes that the curriculum must encompass the development of the whole child and support our vision of:

***“A love of learning and the success of EVERY child at the heart of all we do”.***

We know that every child is capable of success, but that as unique individuals their pathways to reaching success will be different; some will require more personalised provision, but all deserve the same opportunities and high expectations. Our mission statement is what drives us each day to provide the best educational opportunities for all;

***“With a passion and commitment to learning, centred on warm, nurturing and respectful relationships we provide an environment and curriculum that motivates and challenges everyone in our school to succeed.”***

Our curriculum intent is for all our pupils to leave The Topsham School as citizens of the future, with the knowledge, skills and learning powers needed to confidently manage transitions and succeed in every aspect of their lives.

To achieve our aim, we provide a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes and teaches a positive attitude to learning. We know that learning is a continuum and have developed a learning platform that builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills of all children; whatever their starting points, and supports them all to make progress throughout their time with us. The world is an exciting place, one which we want our children to feel confident to explore. To support this we want all our children to feel connected to their community and have a sense of place within their locality and the wider world.

We have identified the following components to be essential if we are to reach our vision; it is vital to note that we see each of these components as being of equal value, each aspect connected to and impacting on the others.

1. **Substantive Knowledge, Skills and Experience:** Substantive knowledge is the subject specific knowledge required to demonstrate an understanding of the subject content laid out within the National Curriculum, This includes the accurate use of subject specific vocabulary and factual accuracy. **“Substantive knowledge is the content that teachers teach as established fact”.** (*Taking Curriculum Seriously. C. Counsell 2018*) Our curriculum builds on prior learning and provides the opportunity for children to revisit previous learnt facts and subject specific skills both within a year, across year groups and Key Stages. This ‘spiral’ approach ensures substantive knowledge and skills are embedded into long term memory and become easier to recall over time. We provide experiences both within the classroom and outside of school that provide children with first-hand opportunities to gain knowledge and apply the skills they have learnt.

***The core skills of reading, vocabulary understanding, writing and mathematics will be threads that run through EVERY area of learning with READING being at the very centre. We know that if a child cannot read or cannot understand and use a wide range of vocabulary they will struggle to access any other area of education.***

**Through this, our pupils will have a good knowledge and understanding of all the areas of the National Curriculum and be able to forge and articulate their own opinions based on knowledge and experience.**

2. **Disciplinary Knowledge and Critical thinking skills:** Disciplinary knowledge is of equal importance to Substantive knowledge. It is this that ensures children have a good understanding of what they have learnt and leads to pupils connecting learning between subject domains. We want our children to be able to make connections in their learning and to think deeply about what they are learning. We have chosen to use the structure and language of Bloom’s Taxonomy to support us in this achieving this.

Substantive knowledge	Disciplinary knowledge
Domain specific Factual content The sequential flow of information required Required subject vocabulary Rules and methods Procedural fluency Structure of learning content within domain	Contextual and related information Big ideas Connecting arguments Opinions and interpretations Associated influences Critical arguments for and against Indirect evidence Inter-disciplinary

*Through this our pupils will develop deeper level thinking skills leading to a greater knowledge and understanding. They will be able to ask questions, challenge others, make links, and develop creative approaches to solve problems.*

### **3. Social Skills:**

To succeed in the world individuals need to know how to initiate, develop and sustain positive relationships. Our intention for our children is that they learn:

- ❖ how a positive society is structured
- ❖ what positive behaviours need to be displayed and maintained
- ❖ how to negotiate and communicate effectively, with empathy, respect and compassion
- ❖ how to work collaboratively and in partnership with others; sharing knowledge and ideas
- ❖ how to manage conflict effectively and the importance of tolerance in promoting a fair and happy society
- ❖ Above all we want our children to understand their role in society and that the choices they make impact positively or negatively on themselves and others.

*Through this, our children will have developed the ability to foster and nurture positive personal and working relationships, be mentally healthy and feel a valued member of our school and wider community.*

4. **Metacognition; Positive Attitudes to Learning:** Understanding how we learn, including the emotional process of learning is imperative if children are going to become life- long learners. Our curriculum teaches children the attitudes to learning (Learning Powers) they need to use to work through challenges to achieve success. We have chosen to use Guy Claxton's Building Learning Power as the backbone in this area of teaching and learning. Our aim is to support children develop the following learning to learn attributes:

- **Resilience: being ready, willing and able to lock onto learning**
- **Resourcefulness- being ready, willing and able to learn in different ways**
- **Reflectiveness- being ready, willing and able to become more strategic about learning**
- **Co-operation and Independence; ready, willing and able to learn alone or with others**

Our practice in this area is also informed by the research of Carol Dwek (The Power of Yet), James Nottingham (The Learning Challenge) and Arthur L. Costa, Bena Kallick (The Habits of Mind).

**Through this, our pupils will understand how they learn, their role within the learning process, their emotional response to challenge and how to articulate this effectively and become resilient, self-motivated, life-long learners.**

These 4 components underpin curriculum planning and implementation.

We have created a visual image to show our curriculum intent in more detail and how each aspect is interconnected. This interconnectedness is important to ensuring that all 4 components are given equal weight and viewed as equally important by both teachers and children.

## [Bibliography](#)

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### **Curriculum Implementation: How we teach and support children succeed and achieve our intended curriculum**

The National Curriculum guides **WHAT** we teach (the core Knowledge and Skills that children must know and understand by the time they leave Primary School), while up to date research and an excellent understanding of how children learn, guides us in **HOW** we teach.

Learning needs to be meaningful and to achieve this we strive to link teaching and learning to topics and themes (when appropriate) that inspire interest, promote curiosity and motivate our children. We do not have a rolling programme for every topic or theme that is taught each year; we know our children and reflect this in our planned provision. Our curriculum topics and themes are linked to our unique local environment and our community when appropriate.

We have identified the following components to be essential in relation to the successful implementation of our curriculum. It is vital to note that we see each of these components as being of equal value, each aspect connected to and impacting on the others.

**1. Shared Values focused on High Quality Outcomes for all our children:**

***“For a child to flourish and achieve in school they need to feel that they belong and are a valued part of the school community. School belonging or school connectedness involves feeling ‘personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment’ (Goodenow, 1993).***

At the centre of our school are our school values: Trust and Respect, Opportunities for all, Partnerships, Success, Health and Happiness, Aspiration and Achievement and Motivation. Our Values have been developed with the children and in consultation with all stakeholders. These values are explicitly linked to and taught within our curriculum. Our Topsham Values create an environment where children feel safe and secure and ready to learn. Building and maintaining positive relationships is the key to children making progress and being mentally healthy.

***“Positive relationships in the classroom/school that are built on trust, kindness, safety and security are an important tool for change, linked not only to better child wellbeing but also to better educational performance.” (Mentally Healthy Schools)***

Our TOPSHAM Values are:

<u>Value</u>	<u>Defined by Adults</u>	<u>Defined by children</u>
Trust and Respect	A positive learning environment is based on respectful relationships. We expect everyone to treat each other with courtesy and with kindness in words and actions. We expect everyone to listen to one another and accept and value each other’s differences. Conflict is part of life and we strive to	I take responsibility for my own behaviour, strive to make good choices and can accept the consequences of any poor choice I make. I trust my peers to look after me and our school

	<p>ensure that our children learn ways to manage disagreement effectively through compromise and tolerance and this is modelled by all staff within the school.</p> <p>Teaching and learning is a collaborative process. Teachers trust that children will be ready to learn and actively engage in every learning opportunity. Children trust that their teachers will be well prepared and able to meet their individual needs with understanding, whether these be educational or emotional. Parents trust teaching staff to be honest in regards to their child's needs, progress and attainment and know that their child will be appropriately supported. As a school we trust parents to actively participate in their child's education, supporting their child to succeed and achieve.</p>	<p>property. I trust and respect others by listening to them, valuing their opinion, and acting with care and kindness in all I do. I expect to be treated in the same way.</p>
<u>Opportunity for all</u>	<p>We value every person in our learning community and strive for equity for all. As a community we celebrate diversity, ensure equal opportunities are created and welcome everyone regardless of their background, race, culture or religion. We are dedicated to meeting the needs of all our children and families and are determined to give every child a wide range of experiences and challenges to support them to develop their interests, discover their strengths and celebrate personal achievements. Our curriculum is clearly linked to children's interests to ignite their curiosity and engagement and to support children to feel part of our community. School trips, residential, sporting events, visits and workshops led by outside artists and professionals provide inspiration and support in raising children's aspirations. We want our children to dream big and know that with the right attitude, and grasping opportunities they can achieve their goals.</p>	<p>I dream BIG and put 100% effort into all I do! I actively involve myself in my learning and the many opportunities school provides, supporting others to do the same. I know that we are not all the same and I accept and celebrate others' differences.</p>
<u>Partnerships</u>	<p>An effective, successful school is based on effective, successful partnerships. Our teaching staff work hard to develop strong, working relationships with parents, knowing what a valuable contribution they make to their child's progress and achievements. Opportunities are provided for children to build relationships within our community that encourage them to be proactive in their responsibilities towards the local community and the wider world. Our school governors are actively engaged in all aspects of school life, providing both support and challenge as the school continually strives to improve outcomes for children. The school is outward looking and works closely with other schools in our locality, as part of the River Exe Learning Partnership (RELP); collaborating, researching and sharing best practice. We actively engage with initiatives and research at a national and international level.</p>	<p>I am able to talk to others and can resolve disagreements with respect and kindness. I am able to work well with others, sharing ideas and collaborating, helping others to achieve their goals.</p>
<u>Success</u>	<p>We are committed to the success of every child. We know that each child's learning journey will be unique to them and celebrate with them when a goal has been met. As well as providing high quality provision we also ensure that children understand their role in achieving success. This includes showing them what success looks like, the steps they need to learn to succeed and providing them with the appropriate level of challenge to support them in meeting their next step targets.</p>	<p>I am learning what success looks like for me and how I can get there. I know that it is OK to ask for help and I do this when I need to. I want to challenge myself and I do my best to achieve my goal.</p>

<u>Health and Happiness</u>	We want everyone in our learning community to be happy. To support this, we teach our children how to keep physically healthy through our PE provision, active playtimes and a wide variety of sports clubs. We strive to ensure everyone knows how to achieve good mental health and what strategies to use to support this. Our Mental Health Ambassadors work as valuable role models for this. Everyone needs to feel safe and cared for if they are to learn, succeed and be happy. We create a warm, safe and nurturing environment that meets and matches the needs of everyone in our school community. We understand that people encounter many ups and downs within their lives and at times may need more support than others; this includes supporting our children, parents and teachers during times of transition. We teach our children empathy and understanding, and adults' model this at all times.	I keep myself and others around me safe. I follow our school values and try and be an example to others; using kind hands, feet and words. I work hard to be physically and mentally healthy so I can be happy and I know who I can talk to if I am feeling sad, or upset. I am empathetic and accept that we all need different support at different times.
<u>Aspiration and Attitudes to Learning</u>	We ensure all our children become confident, independent learners with an enthusiasm for acquiring knowledge. Challenge is at the heart of successful learning and everyone aspires to 'achieve or be more'. Children are taught to understand how they learn and the skills and learning behaviours they need to work through and conquer each new challenge. They are taught the process of learning and understand that making mistakes is part of this process and is to be seen as a positive. We continue to ensure that strong leadership is embedded at all levels and provide a challenging and motivating environment for staff so that they are supported to be the best they can be. Teachers actively seek out and participate in developing collaborative networks that have the capacity to sustain continuous improvement.	I want to be the best I can be. I am in school to learn and make the most progress I can. I know I am as equally responsible for my learning as my teacher. I know that learning is hard but am strong enough not to give up and I learn from my mistakes.
<u>Motivation</u>	Teachers are passionate about teaching and learning and the subjects they teach. They are relentless in finding ways that engage, enthuse and inspire the learners in their care. Children are encouraged to be curious and have a 'thirst' for knowledge. They know what their next steps are and want to achieve.	I know that learning never stops and I work hard in every aspect of school life because I want to. I want to be proud of myself.

**Through this we create a safe, secure learning environment where all stakeholders have a shared and consistent understanding of our Values and positive behaviours that are expected within our school community that support everyone to learn, succeed and achieve.**

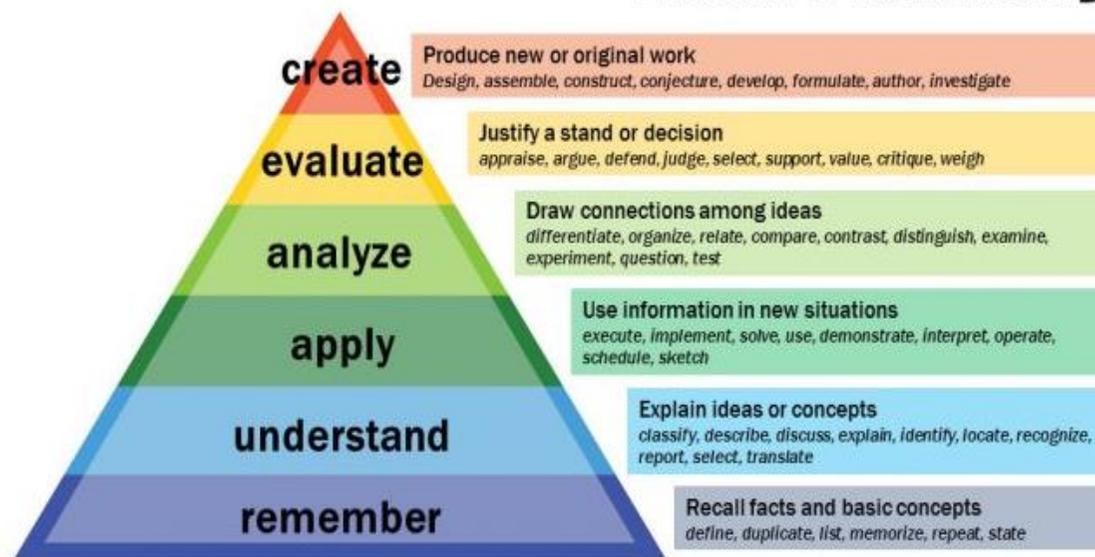
## 2. High Quality Planning

- ★ Our **Subject Leaders** have written **progress and skill frameworks** to support teachers' plan for the development of substantive knowledge, skills and experience, appropriate to the age and stage of the children in their class. This guidance provides teachers with a clear overview of what needs to be covered within the year and also an insight into what went before. Teachers planning starts with a review of prior learning to support children, reflect and recall previous facts and skills and then build on this knowledge; the spiral approach (revisiting prior knowledge and then adding new learning). Through this we aim to

ensure children are able to make links in their learning both within a subject but also see the interconnectedness across subjects; providing moments of “I know this, so I know this!”. Phase groups plan and write Yearly Topic Overviews to ensure every subject is given appropriate weighting, with the core Subjects of Science and Computing taught every half term. These enables Subject Leaders to have a good understanding of the coverage within each year group

- ★ **Disciplinary Knowledge and Critical Thinking Skills Planning through Bloom’s.** Teachers use the framework of Bloom’s Taxonomy to plan subject specific sequences of teaching and learning. This enables them to plan for children’s progression in knowledge and provides opportunity to develop, stretch and challenge children’s thinking skills. Each planned sequence follows the 6 paradigms laid out within Bloom’s Taxonomy, allowing children to access opportunities that require higher order thinking skills by the end of a sequence. Teachers not only plan for learning activities that enable children to explore and succeed in each area but also plan for the questions that they will ask that allow children to articulate their thinking.

## Bloom’s Taxonomy



- ★ **Metacognition: Positive Attitudes to Learning (Learning Powers).** These are explicitly planned for and taught within our teaching sequences/lessons. Through teachers' questions and feedback, linked to Learning Powers, children are supported to understand how they are learning and what they are doing that is supporting them to make progress. Teachers challenge children to consider why they are finding something difficult and what Learning Powers they need to access to support them be independent and to succeed. Teachers celebrate and share examples of positive attitudes to learning and the impact of these attitudes through feedback and on working walls in the learning environment.

**Through this we provide a consistent approach to planning for our curriculum which builds on prior learning, supports children to see connections, challenges and facilitates higher level thinking skills and supports children understand how they learn and what they need to do themselves to achieve and succeed.**

### 3. High Quality Teaching and Learning

As a school we have worked together to form clear definitions of what we consider to be the key attributes for high quality teaching and learning. We have based these definitions on our understanding of how children learn and what we know are needed to provide high quality provision to support children make the progress they are capable of. Our teachers are open to feedback and understand that teaching is a craft, and as such teachers are constantly developing, practising and honing their knowledge and skills. Senior Leaders, Subject Leaders, Peers, Phase Groups and Outside Experts provide support and guidance as needed.

#### How we define high quality teaching and a high quality learning

What constitutes 'high quality teaching'	What constitutes a 'good learner'
Teachers are passionate about what they do. They create a safe and engaging environment that promotes and values learning and supports independence. Teachers, with a thorough knowledge of the children, plan challenging and meaningful learning opportunities based on astute and rigorous Assessment for Learning. They are able to 'match' the needs of all children and their teaching is responsive both within a lesson and across a sequence of lessons. They work tirelessly to ensure that all	A good learner is curious and self motivated- they want to make progress and achieve. A good learner expects to be challenged and understands that learning involves struggle and requires perseverance and resilience. They are unafraid to take risks and to fail. In fact they know mistakes are part of the learning process and are accepted as such. A good learner understands and utilises the learning behaviours needed to succeed. They are emotionally intelligent and can talk about how they are learning,

children make the most progress they can. They have secure subject knowledge and know not only what to teach but how to teach each subject effectively; they have a deep understanding of pedagogy. They are able to devise exciting and motivating lessons that support children to develop skills and make links across the curriculum. They plan plentiful opportunities for children to collaborate and be actively involved in their learning. Through this and the use of a wide range of questions teachers are able to make learning visible and this leads to children's deepening understanding and the uncovering of mistakes that are then used as learning opportunities. Teachers provide precise and incisive feedback that moves learning forward, challenges misconceptions and promotes positive learning behaviours. Teachers actively model the skills needed to be a 'good learner' understanding that teaching is a craft that needs to be practised and honed continually.

including acknowledging their emotional response to challenge. They are eager to answer questions and equally happy to ask questions themselves to consolidate and deepen their own understanding. They can explain their thinking and can use resources and pictures to make their learning visible to others. They know when and who to ask for help. A good learner has the ability to work collaboratively or independently and recognises the need to be able to do both. They talk about what they are learning, reflect on previous learning and make links both within a subject and across subject areas. A good learner knows that learning never stops, it is a continuum.

**What constitutes high quality teaching:** These are our non negotiables and the key skills we are all working on to develop and refine regardless of experience.

- ✓ Formative Assessment: 5 facets
- ✓ Pitch
- ✓ Match
- ✓ Subject Knowledge
- ✓ Metacognition: Positive Attitudes to Learning

**Through this we create a supportive learning ethos for both teachers and children and enable all stakeholders to have a clear and consistent understanding of how we teach and support children achieve and succeed within our intended curriculum.**

#### **4. High Quality, Enabling Learning Environment**

The learning environment in a successful school and classroom promotes the school's values and enables ALL children to feel accepted and part of the school. We strive to provide a calm, purposeful , inclusive, learning environment that is well organised, well resourced, promotes independence and shows learning in action.

In our school we will sustain a calm, productive, and positive learning environment where:

- classrooms/teaching spaces are well organised with a range of relevant resources.
- classroom/teaching spaces are clearly laid out so that pupils can be independent and tidy up after themselves. Teaching staff lead by example; their work spaces and resource areas are tidy and well organised
- classroom/teaching spaces are used effectively so that both children and teaching staff can move around safely and effective teaching and learning can take place
- all learners know the acceptable noise levels for classwork and teachers help to maintain this by example
- windows are to be kept as clear as possible for both health and safety and safe- guarding purposes.
- children and teaching staff know and understand the schools values and the structures in place to promote positive behaviour. Teaching staff are consistent in how they promote positive behaviour and this supports children feel happy, safe and secure
- all staff, including support staff, have a consistent approach to teaching and know how to meet the needs of each individual in their class

Displays within the classroom support learning and are based on a 'working wall' approach. Learning Intentions are visible and teachers modelling and prompts and examples of children's work are displayed as part of the ongoing learning in each classroom. This ensures children can 'see' the learning journey and 'see' the connections between each learning intention and the desired outcome. Teachers refer to these displays and children interact with them during their learning to support their independence. Relevant questions and feedback are shared on these displays to promote, prompt and challenge thinking and this includes reference to Learning Powers to support children understand HOW they are being successful.

**Through this we provide an exciting, inclusive, learning environment that promotes and makes learning visible to both teachers and children, enables independence and celebrates the learning process.**

These 4 components underpin our curriculum implementation.

We have created a visual image to show our curriculum implementation in more detail and how each aspect is interconnected. This interconnectedness is important to ensuring that all 4 components are given equal weight and viewed as equally important by both teachers and children.

### **Curriculum Impact: The extent to which pupils have learned what we intended them to learn, and how we know this**

Monitoring, measuring and evidencing impact is what lies at the core of every school. It is what guides a school in identifying areas of strength and areas of development. Monitoring, measuring and evidencing impact in relation to our curriculum is led by the Governors, SLT, Subject Leaders and teachers themselves.

We use these 4 indicators to support us in understanding our impact on children's progress and attainment.

#### **1. School Improvement Priorities**

School Improvement Priorities drive school improvement and the school has a School Improvement plan that is used as a working document. All staff are aware of this plan and the priorities being worked on. As a working document, priorities may change if required. All Professional Dialogue is focused on our School Improvement priorities.

**Through this we aim to ensure we are working on the right aspects of school development to promote and secure the best progress and attainment outcomes for ALL our children.**

## **2. Monitoring and Measuring Progress through Assessment: Teacher Assessment and published Data**

Teachers are constantly assessing children. They do this through the questions they ask children, listening to the responses children make and through the marking of work. Teachers use both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data is found using both in school programmes and statutory assessments

**Through this, we understand the needs of ALL our children and use this information to identify next steps and match learning needs to ensure children make progress.**

## **3. Monitoring and Supporting High Quality Teaching and Learning**

If children are to make progress they need high quality teaching. Teaching is a craft and as such requires ongoing practise, refinement, professional dialogue and ongoing professional development. This is provided both from inside school through Subject Leaders and SLT and through support from outside agencies

**Through this we aim to ensure teachers have the skills, subject knowledge and confidence to teach all areas of curriculum and so ensure the progress and success of ALL children in every area of their learning.**

## **4. Monitoring and Supporting High Quality Planning**

**High quality teaching stems from high quality planning. Subject Leaders provide support for planning and monitoring ensures planning is both pitched and matched to the age and stage of the children in accordance to their Key Stage and level of need.**

**Through this we aim for planning to be consistent across the school, at the appropriate pitch for each stage and phase and offers equal opportunities for ALL children to make progress through the year**

**Any form of monitoring is based on professional dialogue between relevant parties. Ways in which we monitor and evidence progress and achievement include:**

- Pupil progress meetings
- Phase groups meetings
- Analysis of groups
- teacher assessment ; including progress over time
- statutory assessment; for some subjects
- Pupil Voice with books/floor books so children can talk about their learning and Subject Leaders can see progress over time and what has been achieved
- Pupil/teacher voice focused on the learning shared on working walls
- Teacher Voice: professional conversations between teachers and Subject Leaders about what has been taught and the outcomes
- Learning walks and drop ins, followed by professional dialogue
- CPD including personalised CPD and support
- Pupil Conferencing alongside book looks led by the Subject Leader
- Teacher Voice: professional conversations between teachers and Subject Leaders about what has been taught and the outcomes
- Open mornings/afternoons that allow children to share their learning, including learning outcomes, with parents/and or the wider community
- Parent feedback from these open events

**Through this we aspire to meet our commitment to ensuring the success of EVERY child.**