

## Curriculum intentions

At Half Acres Primary Academy, we offer a curriculum which is broad, balanced and deep, inspiring a thirst for learning. The curriculum incorporates the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum 2014 and additional experiences and opportunities which meet the learning and developmental needs of the pupils in our school including their place within the local community. We are determined that our curriculum will equip pupils with the requisite knowledge, understanding and skills to be successful, independent and motivated learners in readiness for their next stage of education. Our intentions can be separated into four main areas.

- 1) To develop the subject specific knowledge, skills and understanding contained within the National Curriculum in order for all of our children to achieve or exceed their full potential in all aspects of their learning
- 2) To develop positive and proactive behaviours for learning (such as curiosity, questioning, perseverance, resilience, co-operation) that enable our pupils to apply skills and knowledge in a range of contexts, communicate confidently and succeed in the world
- 3) To develop citizens of the future, with appropriate social skills, cultural awareness and a sense of morality, who invest in their community and are fully prepared for modern day life in a diverse society (values at the heart of the curriculum)
- 4) To foster a sense of spirituality and appreciation of their place within the world and to promote positive mental health.

## Curriculum Implementation

1. The curriculum at Half Acres has been designed to meet the needs of our children, with a strong emphasis on the development of speaking and listening being a high priority from the outset to enable our children to communicate confidently. There is an emphasis on ensuring the acquisition of basic skills and knowledge through providing as much hands-on experience as possible in the development of skills and revisiting key facts within each subject area. Children are expected to communicate learning in a range of ways and given appropriate opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in different contexts across the whole of the curriculum, thereby reinforcing key learning.

In Maths there is an emphasis on the use of practical apparatus to develop understanding of new concepts. Arithmetic skills are practised daily in order to ensure pupils have secure knowledge of basics and are fluent in the four operations and place value. There is also regular exposure to problem solving and reasoning tasks. Teachers draw on resources from the Maths Hub to support the teaching of the National Curriculum as well as a range of supporting materials including Little Big Maths in Early Years and Big Maths CLIC in KS1.

**English-** Our pupils are exposed to a book rich environment and a high priority is given to encouraging a love of books through regular library visits, high quality book areas in class and exposure to a variety of text-related experiences and reading in a variety of contexts -related experiences. Reading mileage is built up early with pupils changing home reading books at least twice a week lower down school and parents encouraged to read with their children regularly. Teachers deliver both whole class and guided sessions for reading. Each teacher bases their units of work for reading and writing each half term on an age-appropriate text in order to develop both an appreciation of literature and a range of knowledge and skills. Fiction, non-

fiction and poetry units are carefully planned to ensure that children are taught a full range of skills including comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, composition and editing and that they have opportunities to apply these in extended pieces of writing and independent reading tasks. Assessments are made using Writing Assessment Grids devised by and moderated with the other academies in our Multi Academy Trust. Cursive script is taught from entry into Early Years and expectations for handwriting and presentation across school are high.

**Foundation subjects** - Termly themes are planned by teachers in KS1 & KS2. These are half termly in Early Years. Key knowledge and skills in each subject have been mapped out by subject leaders to ensure a progression of skills that promotes deepening understanding as pupils move through school. Where it is felt that pupils' understanding will benefit from visits or visitors these are used to maximise learning. Recent examples include a visit from Bowlands Farm to support learning in Early Years. This year subject leaders are working on how key knowledge and understanding can be revisited regularly in order to ensure pupils embed these in line with the latest educational thinking.

2. In order to develop a thirst for knowledge from the earliest point of their education, the Early Years environments are set up to ignite in pupils the desire to explore. The areas of learning, both inside and outdoors, excite and stimulate curiosity. They allow pupils to use their imagination, for example, in setting up role play scenarios with crates or in model making, small world or the construction area. Staff invest time in modelling how areas may be used and, through effective questioning, deepen pupils' thinking. They also model how to share and take turns, promoting the importance of co-operation with their peers. Collaborative tasks are both planned for and encouraged during unstructured times. Resources within the unit are organised to enable pupils to develop increasing independence and to ensure pupils leave the EYs with a high degree of self-sufficiency. They are also taught to take responsibility for tidying away after themselves. Open-ended tasks are carefully planned which allow pupils to persevere and to concentrate for increasingly lengthy periods of time. Opportunities for guided reading and writing ensure pupils develop core literacy skills and daily Little Big Maths sessions secures competency in numeracy.

Experiences in KS1 and KS2 build on these foundations. Communication skills are further developed through both core and foundation subjects with planned opportunities to acquire specific oral and written skills through explicit teaching and a range of experiences across the curriculum to apply these. In subjects such as RE, PHSE and the Values curriculum pupils take an increasingly proactive role in posing questions and in using independent research to pursue answers or debate with their peers. Pupils have regular opportunities to work at length independently in order to build resilience and foster a sense of autonomy, especially in KS2. Examples of this include weekly arithmetic practice and fortnightly gold writes. However, the curriculum is also designed with experiences that involve cooperation with peers. These range from small team games and group design and construction tasks to whole class projects in enterprise. Children are trained to respond to their feedback in order to improve further and to give constructive feedback to help others.

**3. Values are at the heart of our curriculum and drive all aspects of school life. In order to become responsible citizens of the community and - in a wider sense - the world, we focus**

upon 6 key values across the year (one per half term), which directly relate to the core British Values. These are underpinned by related values. Our values are:

- **Responsibility (honesty and trust),**
- **Co-operation (teamwork and equality),**
- **Resilience (courage and perseverance),**
- **Respect (caring)**
- **Friendship (caring for others and thoughtfulness)**
- **Tolerance (understanding).**

Each half term, the whole school focusses on one value, and displays this in and around school. We inform parents of the value through a newsletter and celebrate the value in action from day to day through personalised stickers awarded for acts of the value and post-its celebrating examples of pupils who put the value into action.

Every two weeks, Picture News is shared in a whole school assembly and used as a vehicle to stimulate discussion back in class for the following fortnight, allowing pupils to revisit and deepen their thinking. Explicit links are made to a British Value and our values curriculum and ideas are shared in a subsequent assembly. Through this, and the wider curriculum, children learn to listen to and respect the views of others, tolerate and celebrate difference and make informed choices based upon a growing knowledge of a diverse world. Through exposure to a range of protected characteristics within the curriculum their understanding of equality and inclusion is developed.

The termly themes planned for across each phase are carefully constructed with strong threads of key values within them. In KS1 the RE, History and Geography curriculum enable pupils to develop knowledge of diversity and to develop tolerance and respect for others. Stereotypes are challenged and diversity celebrated in the design of the curriculum. For instance, historical figures we learn about are drawn from both genders and a range of different cultures. The PHSE curriculum is woven with how to take responsibility for safety, friendship messages and inclusion. Pupils have opportunities to develop their cultural awareness through the study of different places and peoples in the world in Geography, a range of world religions and art/artists from other cultures and technological inventions. Moral and issues are addressed in the context of history, geography, PHSE and RE as well as in response to Picture News and current events.

In KS2 explicit links are made between values and other curriculum areas with pupils regularly considering social injustices and ways in which equality and diversity can be promoted and celebrated. Examples of this are the Invictus Games within the English and Geography curriculum within Lower KS2 and the Black Civil Rights Movement in UKS2. In KS2 Philosophy for Children (P4C) is often used to debate questions that challenge stereotypes or address issues of discrimination.

Every year the whole school participates in planned activities for Say No To Bullying Week as well as theme days/weeks such as Remembrance where the school focuses on a fundamental British Value and reflect upon its meaning.

Teachers ask learners to undertake positions of responsibility around the academy, as we believe that children understand values by seeing them in action in others. These include values ambassadors, lunchtime buddies, school councillors and peer supporters.

4. When our teachers plan the curriculum, they think not just about what we should learn and how we should learn it, but also the opportunities to explore beliefs and experience; respect faiths, feelings and values; enjoy learning about oneself, others and the surrounding world; use imagination and creativity and time to reflect.

Incorporating opportunities to develop spirituality, not only promotes the development of curiosity and encourages the inclination to question, it enables pupils to become more self aware and promotes understanding of others.

Planned opportunities for fostering these include

- Visits - visiting a range of different environments from our forest school to spaces such as the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, York Minster and Askrigg.
- Where pupils are not able to have a direct first-hand experience, planning may incorporate a virtual experience
- Increasing the variety and frequency of opportunity to participate in physical activity to promote mental health eg through PE lessons, after school clubs and lunchtime provision
- Opportunities to reflect on beliefs -for example in RE, SEAL, history or Picture News debates

### **Impact**

What do we hope will be the impact of our curriculum and how do we measure it?

1. We strive to ensure that our children's attainment in core and foundation subjects is in line with or exceeding their potential when we consider the varied starting points of children. We measure this carefully using a range of materials, but always considering Age Related Expectations. We intend that the impact is that children will be academically and physically prepared for life in high school and in Modern Britain and the world.

2: The impact of this is seen in the way in which pupils approach challenges they encounter in their lives. Within the classroom, pupil attitudes that evidence impact include the way in which they respond to a challenge, showing motivation and resilience when they encounter a difficulty. We intend to achieve by developing this intention is seen by how the children approach challenges every day. This could be on the playground, in a game or disagreement, or in class in a complex learning challenge. The impact should be that children don't give up, are highly motivated to succeed and achieve and are equipped with all the personal skills to do this.

3: By investing time in developing social, moral and cultural understanding, our learners will become responsible citizens with an understanding of complex values such as equality and respect. Only by really learning what these mean will our pupils be able to develop a character that prepares them for living in the community, demonstrating tolerance and inclusion. We measure this not just by the work our children produce, but in the behaviours we see each and every day in all learners on the playground, in corridors, and in the many roles we give them. The impact of this intention is seen in the daily interaction of all members of our community, including staff and children.

Our learners will be motivated by a strong personal sense of morality. They will make decisions for the right reasons and in the best interests of their community. They will be able to decide what is right and what is wrong and will be resilient to the influence of others. They will go out into the world and make a difference in their own life and to others. Our learners will be the owners of their own destinies.

4. Our intention is that pupils are well-balanced individuals who have a positive outlook on life and who are mentally healthy. Although it is challenging to measure, we will use quantitative and qualitative information to help us to measure impact. Well-being questionnaires and cases brought to the attention of school, often through the Family Mentor, will be a good indication of pupils' mental health.