



# Picknalls First School

## Connected Curriculum Statement

### 2023-2024



*'You can see from their smiles as they are welcomed by staff that pupils enjoy school. Parents, understandably, are happy with the school. The staff are ambitious for pupils to succeed and broaden their knowledge of the wider world. Pupils study many interesting topics.'* **OFSTED Jan 2020**

### **Intent**

We believe Picknalls First School should be a wonderful place where children want to be and learning takes place both in and out of the classroom. Learning should be through a mixture of exploration, discovery, creativity and a variety of sensory and kinaesthetic experiences which encourage learners to want to explore more in a journey of lifelong learning. They will learn the English and Maths skills needed for life and learning to progress in their education.

Whatever their background they will learn to shape their futures and develop their unique capacities and skills. They will be encouraged to be curious and use thinking skills to innovate, be creative and problem solve. They will develop the first understandings of employment and entrepreneurship. A primary education should set learners up for life, with the knowledge and skills to be well-rounded individuals, mentally and physically healthy, with an appreciation for and a generosity towards people, the world and the universe around them.

Picknalls First School is very proud of the journey it has been on over the last few years in relation to its curriculum development. We feel our inclusive curriculum offers a broad and balanced approach which allows all children, no matter their ability, to be able to fully access the curriculum and enrichment opportunities.

Our experienced teachers deliver quality first teaching alongside the highly skilled support staff. All staff collaborate to ensure all children are on track to meet and exceed personal attainment and progress targets through our ever-evolving curriculum.

As we are a First School we have the privilege of starting each child's journey and therefore focus on ensuring the basic skills of each subject are secure. The basic skills are reinforced across the whole of our 'Connected Curriculum.' We then build on these steps to ensure that each child is prepared for their next stage of education and in shaping their future ambitions.

When redesigning our curriculum, we worked very closely with our Middle and High School partners within the Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT). Our primary aim when forming the ULT in 2017, was to become a locally geographic all through 3-18 schools' network, with one of our key strengths being the strong transition and curriculum development.

*'Our vision is of a seamless educational journey for the children and young people from pre-school through to sixth-form and beyond. All of our children and young people will be equally and highly valued, no matter which school they are in: no child will be left behind and no school will be left behind. Everyone will be an achiever and every child will be well known within his/her school.'* **ULT Visions, Values and Strategy Document, July 2019.**

### **Implementation**

We use a variety of techniques in order to deliver a broad and balanced 'Connected Curriculum,' which is based on the National Curriculum, that ALL children at Picknalls First School can enjoy and succeed in.

The structure of the school day consists of the mornings being focused sessions including English lessons, Maths lessons, Phonics sessions, Guided Reading activities etc. The afternoons are when we deliver our 'Connected Curriculum' as links are made between the subjects whenever possible so that the learning is seamless and connects together. Links between

the topic and the morning English and Maths lessons are made wherever possible. When questioned by Governors and Leaders children all say they prefer this style of delivery that we have developed. Quotes such as ‘the learning makes more sense,’ and ‘our topics are great fun and really interesting,’ are confirmation that the way we deliver our education works.

The topics for the Connected Curriculum throughout the whole school follow the same process. We start with a ‘launch day’ where a fascinator will be used to introduce the topic and hook the children in. Fascinators may include: a trip, a visitor, a special object, a display etc. Each classroom throughout has a special ‘Learning Journey Tree.’ The trunk of the tree includes the topic name, the roots of the tree will show what the children already know about the topic and what they would like to know over their learning, and the leaves on the tree will show what their new learning has been. Each year group will work through their learning journey and we will finish with an outcome day where they will complete an assessment to show the progress they have made in their learning. The EYFS and KS1 classrooms also have a dedicated role play area in order to bring further learning to life.

Although subjects have a named person responsible for the oversight and development of their individual subject, each middle leader works in a subject team to ensure support for similar subjects and to create wider curriculum approaches and thinking. Regular subject team staff meetings allow for each team to design an action plan, implement the actions and monitor the impact across the whole school. Weekly staff meetings, and a dedicated Subject Leaders meeting, also allow for Subject Leaders to share updates quickly and effectively across the whole school.

We include parents wherever possible in the child’s learning in order for them to support the learning beyond the classroom and outside of the school. Parents receive a half termly ‘parent information sheet’ which can also be located on the website. This outlines the learning that will be covered so that parents can further support them at home. The topics for the year are also on the website in our long-term plan.

*‘The school’s ‘connected curriculum’ helps pupils build on what they have learned before. Pupils in Year 1 go ‘on safari’, learning about the geography of Africa. In Year 3, ancient Greece is brought to life through the ‘groovy Greeks’ topic. Pupils recall interesting facts because the curriculum really does connect with their learning and interests.’ OFSTED Jan 2020.*





## **Impact**

*‘Pupils’ personal development is a strength. Pupils have great opportunities to become school councillors. They are very clear about British values of democracy and respect for people whatever their colour, beliefs or background. Pupils make a huge contribution to their school and community. They can become well-being champions; ICT buddies to help younger pupils; school councillors; eco warriors and more.’ OFSTED Jan 2020.*

Our journey began when Leaders realised that some children were struggling to retain the curriculum content of single subjects, for example having to retain everything they had learnt in history on a Tuesday afternoon until they repeated the subject the following Tuesday afternoon. It was obvious that this style of delivery did not suit all learners. Some found it hard to make the links between subjects and learning and they struggled with the recall of facts from one week to the next. Standards at this point were broadly in line or below age related expectations. Since introducing and then tweaking our Connected Curriculum delivery, we are celebrating levels above National averages in all externally validated aspects. Internal school level data for both attainment and progress is also very positive and shows we successfully close the gap for many vulnerable groups.

Where children are not on track to achieve expected outcomes personalised interventions and strategies are employed.

How do we celebrate children’s learning at Picknalls?

-  Rewards
-  Positive role models
-  Work on display
-  Red merit certificates

- 🔗 General assemblies and presentations
- 🔗 Parent assemblies
- 🔗 Internal and external competitions
- 🔗 School trips and visits
- 🔗 School visitors
- 🔗 Bronze, silver and gold merit awards
- 🔗 End of year celebrations
- 🔗 Performances
- 🔗 Social media
- 🔗 Parents reports/parents evenings

*'We are single-minded about ensuring that all of our children and young people, individually and collectively, achieve their potential - and even surpass what they expect of themselves.'* **ULT Visions, Values and Strategy Document, July 2019.**

## **Curriculum Action Plan 2023 2024**

Although very proud of our curriculum journey so far, we constantly keep the curriculum under review.

Current aspects under review are:

- 🔗 Each curriculum leader to update their **curriculum intent document** for 2023 2024.
- 🔗 Each curriculum leader to be part of a **subject development team** and support, monitor and develop subjects across the whole school. Middle leaders to carry out at least one self-review activity across the whole school.
- 🔗 **Writing** to be main whole school and ULT subject focus. All relevant staff to attend INSET on the skills progression of teaching writing, adapt planning to meet new writing lead expectations and take part in self-review activities on writing.
- 🔗 **Subject training** – core subject leaders to attend ULT termly training with ULT colleagues Foundation subject leaders to attend the second round of ULT three tier meetings with standing agenda items given by headteachers.
- 🔗 To build on the four sessions of first school **moderation** training by LA advisor last year, all teachers to attend end of year moderation twilight led by key staff across our five schools.
- 🔗 Develop, distribute and ensure understanding of a new whole school **homework policy**.
- 🔗 Provide effective **additional interventions** for individuals and small groups across the school to address misconceptions in learning and close data gaps for disadvantaged children.

*'At the heart of leaders' ambitions are pupils and their families. Pupils thrive and the school's aims, 'achieve, believe and care', are at the centre of everything this school is about. Pupils behave exceptionally well, work hard and achieve well.'* **OFSTED Jan 2020.**

Written by the Headteacher, Mrs Tapp.

