



No Barriers to Excellence



Ambition



Collaboration



Equity

# Knowledge Curriculum – Global, Inclusive and Challenging

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# Knowledge Curriculum – global, inclusive and challenging

## Our Mission

Spring Trust Board of Trustees has agreed this Policy and as such, it applies to all schools within the Trust. All policies, procedures, practices and systems are regularly reviewed to reflect the Trust's anti-racist stance and commitment to equality.

All children are entitled to a curriculum and to the powerful knowledge which will open doors and maximise their life chances:

- Our schools challenge social inequality by instilling shared and powerful knowledge.
- Children need powerful knowledge to understand and interpret the world, and to think in new and unexpected ways. Without it, they remain dependent upon those who have it.
- Each pupil is entitled to receive the best education possible and achieve the highest standard.
- Pupils learn best from a broad and challenging curriculum.
- The curriculum should involve first-hand experience and be taught in ways which make sense for pupils.
- Achievement in a range of subjects across the curriculum including science, humanities and the arts, improves pupils' confidence and self-esteem, enabling them to tackle more challenging work and to develop a positive attitude towards school.
- Improving pupils' confidence and self-esteem has a positive effect upon their attainment in the core subjects.
- Curriculum breadth and academic rigour are key to our mission: "Imparting broad knowledge to all children is the single most effective way to narrow the gap between demographic groups through schooling." D Hirsch, *The Knowledge Deficit: Closing the Shocking Education Gap for American Children*, New York, 2006

## How?

**We aim to maximise attainment, value diversity, develop character and build cultural capital through a knowledge rich curriculum**

- Our curriculum is led by high-quality subject leaders, working in teams to create the richest narrative possible for our pupils. Quality and high expectations are key and ensure all pupils can access the curriculum regardless of their starting points.
- The discipline of each subject is given high status; the specifics of what we want pupils to learn matter and the traditions of subject disciplines are respected.
- The curriculum supports children to learn established facts about each subject within each unit of work (substantive knowledge) and takes them through a journey from early years

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to the end of Key Stage 2 to obtain the key principles and methods of each subject (disciplinary knowledge).

- Skills and understanding are seen as forms of knowledge and we do not believe that there are any real generic skills that can be taught outside of specific knowledge domains.
- The curriculum is planned vertically and horizontally giving thought to the optimum knowledge sequence for building secure schema.
- The curriculum is designed to be remembered in detail: to be stored in our pupils' long-term memories so that they can later build on it, forming ever wider and deeper schema. As a result, a good knowledge-rich curriculum embraces learning from cognitive science about memory, forgetting and the power of retrieval practice.
- The curriculum is owned by pupils from all faiths and backgrounds, not by any one. The selected content conforms to shared cultural agreements of what is considered valuable to know. It is the entitlement of all and we resist parental opt-outs.
- The curriculum embraces and values the most powerful knowledge from a variety of cultures and traditions.
- At each phase, the curriculum focuses on closing gaps, early intervention and developing the core literacy and numeracy skills for success at that level.
- Both in and out of the classroom, the curriculum builds the hard work, diligence and resilience necessary for success in life.
- The curriculum introduces pupils to new experiences and powerful knowledge beyond the classroom and outside the academy to broaden their horizons and to prepare them fully for later life.

## Core Knowledge

"Nearly all of our most cherished ideals for education - from reading comprehension and problem solving to critical thinking and creativity - rest on a foundation of knowledge." - ED Hirsch

The foundation stones of a successful education lie in the acquisition of core knowledge and basic skills. Without these skills, children will not make the high educational progress that is expected of them. We place great emphasis on learning basic skills but also in the procurement of a rich bank of factual knowledge. Built on the premise of 'cultural literacy', the core knowledge concept is grounded in cognitive science and research on effective school systems worldwide. It promotes academic excellence, greater fairness and higher literacy through teaching a body of specific, lasting knowledge in such a way that allows all children, regardless of background, to develop their knowledge of the world and use that understanding to make links, understand what they are facing and put things into context. Our aim is that when pupils leave Year 6, they will be highly numerate and literate, with a real joy for learning and a good base of solid core knowledge.

## Teaching and Learning

- All lessons have clear learning objectives, which are shared and reviewed with the pupils effectively.
- A variety of strategies, including questioning, discussion, concept mapping, teacher feedback, peer and self-marking, are used to assess understanding. Teachers use this information to inform next steps.
- Activities inspire pupils to experiment and investigate the world around them and to help them raise their own questions such as “Why...?”, “How...?” and “What happens if...?”
- Activities develop the skills of enquiry, observation, locating sources of information, selecting appropriate equipment and using it safely, measuring and checking results, and making comparisons and communicating results and findings.
- Lessons make effective links with other curriculum areas and subjects, especially in English, maths and computing.
- Activities are challenging, motivating and extend pupils’ learning.
- Pupils have opportunities to develop their skills in, and take responsibility for, planning investigative work, selecting relevant resources, making decisions about sources of information, carrying out activities safely and deciding on the best form of communicating their findings.
- Core knowledge is embedded in every lesson with low stakes quizzes, retrieval practice, factual recall and recaps on past lessons, which are used to reinforce knowledge in the long-term memory.
- Central to our Teaching & Learning Strategy, and an integral part of our one Trust curriculum, is the development of deep learning: high quality teaching that enables pupils to embed new learning into their long-term memory.
- Lessons enable pupils to embed learning. They include the following fundamental approaches:
  - **Feedback** with clear next steps which have been acted upon by the children and any errors or misconceptions are addressed.
  - **Metacognition and self-regulation**, to include explicit instruction (eg I do, we do, you do).
  - **Adaptive teaching**.
  - **Collaboration** - Group activities and paired work, including use of technology to enhance learning.
  - **Oral language interventions** (Voice21), promoting pupils’ interactions in groups.

## English

As a core subject that encompasses reading, writing, speaking and listening, English has a place of utmost importance in our curriculum at Spring Trust. The teaching of early reading and phonics via the Read Write Inc scheme is the main trust priority.

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# Reading

## Early phonics:

Children are taught to master 'sounds' in EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 to ensure that they are able to decode in a variety of contexts. The mastery is achieved through a mixture of small groups and highly trained staff, and children are supported to ensure that they can sound out and write the required graphemes and phonemes for each stage before they move onto the next. It is only through this saturation that the children are then ready for more formal reading lessons, which focus on reading comprehension, towards the end of Year 2 and onwards.

## Reading:

Reading is the teaching of comprehension of a variety of reading types and genres. The children are offered tasks per week based around a given text, and each task given has a focus of vocabulary, inference, predictions, evaluation, retrieval or summary. We believe that these skills underpin a child's ability to understand and critique what they have read, and the task-based system of teaching allows us to enforce these key concepts towards the end of Year 2 and KS2: again with a mastery focus.

The teaching of reading is underpinned by a trust wide initiative to develop a love for reading amongst all pupils. By instilling this engagement from an early age through interaction with all stakeholders, an excellent standard of teaching, high quality and varied reading materials and stimulating author visits and trips, we believe that pupils' progression in reading ability will be accelerated.

## Writing:

Across the Trust, writing is taught through a consistent Three-Phase Writing Model: Study, Twist and Create. This approach ensures pupils develop strong transcriptional and compositional skills, a rich vocabulary and confidence in writing for a range of purposes and audiences. Teaching is rooted in high-quality model texts, explicit instruction and structured opportunities for practice and application .

### Pre-Planning

Teachers select a high-quality model text, identify two clear writing outcomes and define a small number of key writing features (a maximum of three). A teacher-written model text is produced and quality-assured to ensure ambition, accuracy and consistency across the Trust

### Phase 1: Study

During the Study phase, pupils closely explore the model text, focusing on purpose, audience and structure. Vocabulary, sentence construction, grammar and punctuation are taught explicitly. A clear writing toolkit is developed to capture the key features of effective writing and is used throughout the unit to support learning and assessment. Oracy is embedded through discussion, retelling and rehearsal to support fluency and confidence .

### Phase 2: Twist

In the Twist phase, pupils adapt the model text by changing elements such as characters, setting, viewpoint or events. Teaching remains highly scaffolded through shared writing,

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planning structures and formative feedback, ensuring pupils apply the taught writing features with increasing control and independence.

### Phase 3: Create

During the Create phase, pupils independently plan, write and refine their own piece, drawing on the toolkit and planning strategies introduced earlier. Writing is completed in stages, with regular opportunities for oral rehearsal, vocabulary development and targeted editing to improve quality and accuracy

This consistent approach ensures clear progression in writing, high expectations and equity across the Trust, enabling pupils to become confident, capable and reflective writers.

### **Speaking and Listening /Oracy**

Opportunities are given to all children to develop their speaking and listening skills. These occur not just in English lessons, but throughout the curriculum. Where it is needed, we provide pupils with additional oral language interventions which include:

- Targeted reading aloud and book discussion.
- Explicitly extending pupils' spoken vocabulary.
- The use of structured questioning to develop reading comprehension.
- The use of purposeful, curriculum-focused, dialogue and interaction.

Oracy is embedded in our daily teaching. Pupils are taught to become more effective speakers and listeners so that they feel empowered to better understand themselves, each other and the world around them.

Through a high quality oracy education, pupils learn through talk and to talk. This is when they develop and deepen their subject knowledge and understanding through talk in the classroom, which has been planned, designed, modelled, scaffolded and structured to enable them to learn the skills needed to talk effectively.

In summary, English is taught progressively with a focus on mastery. Children are given high quality teaching as they enter primary school to ensure that they have a concrete grasp of the basic skills required to excel. Once these are embedded, children are engaged fully through enrichment activities that complement their learning so that they understand the value of reading and writing in their lives to come, ensuring that a love for English is prevalent in their school lives and beyond.

## Maths

Our aim is to deliver an ambitious and coherent mathematics curriculum from Nursery to Year 6, that challenges and supports all pupils to develop deep and secure mathematical understanding. Across the Trust, pupils follow the National Curriculum for mathematics, with teaching carefully planned to meet the age-related expectations and needs of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Mathematics is taught using a mastery approach, supported by the White Rose Maths scheme. This ensures a consistent, well-sequenced curriculum that prioritises depth of

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understanding, representation and structure. New concepts are introduced through a Concrete, Pictorial and Abstract (CPA) approach, enabling pupils to explore mathematical ideas through hands-on resources, visual representations and, ultimately, abstract notation.

Fluency in the fundamentals of mathematics is developed through regular and varied practice, while conceptual understanding is strengthened through reasoning and problem-solving opportunities. Pupils are encouraged to think logically, work systematically and communicate their mathematical thinking clearly using accurate mathematical language. Mathematical talk is an integral part of lessons and supports pupils in explaining, justifying and refining their ideas.

Wherever possible, mathematics is applied across the wider curriculum to reinforce learning and demonstrate its relevance to everyday life. Through rich practical experiences, visual models and purposeful problem-solving, pupils develop confidence, enjoyment and curiosity in mathematics.

Our mathematics curriculum provides pupils with a strong foundation for understanding the world, reasoning mathematically and appreciating the beauty, power and usefulness of mathematics, preparing them effectively for the next stages of their education.

## Science

The science curriculum is meticulously designed to cultivate a deep understanding of scientific principles, while fostering a sense of curiosity and critical thinking in young minds. Lesson plans, prioritise hands-on experiments and interactive activities, allowing students to actively engage with scientific concepts. Through this approach, children not only memorise facts but also develop essential skills such as observation, analysis and problem-solving. The integration of real-world applications and relatable examples sparks interest, making science more accessible and enjoyable for our primary school students. Our approach to science education aims to inspire a lifelong love for learning and equip students with the skills needed to navigate an increasingly complex and technologically advanced world.



## Computing

We aim for our children to be confident, competent and discerning users of digital technology, which will prepare them for participation in a rapidly changing world. Through well trained, skilled and motivated staff, as well as parental and external support, we encourage children to develop initiative, independent learning skills and celebrate success. Our children have opportunities to gain rapid access to ideas and experiences from a wide range of people, communities and cultures.

All stakeholders model how to use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly. The National Curriculum for Computing specifies that Primary Computing should include the overall areas of Computer science, Digital literacy and Information technology. To ensure progression across year groups and to guarantee an exciting and relevant computing scheme for all pupils, we have split these three areas into several streams: E-Safety, Typing

skills, Algorithms & programming, Digital art & design, The Internet/World Wide Web, Digital sound and music and key Google applications.

## History

History helps pupils to understand the how and why of the world in which they live. Through the study of history, pupils develop curiosity about the past in Britain and the wider world and gain a secure understanding of how societies, cultures and communities have changed over time. By exploring the links between past and present, pupils learn how historical events, people and decisions continue to shape life today.

Our history curriculum supports pupils in developing a strong sense of identity and a clear chronological framework for their learning. Through the study of significant events, individuals and civilisations, pupils deepen their understanding of diversity, build respect for different cultures and perspectives, and reflect on how history influences values, attitudes and personal choices.

Teaching places a strong emphasis on historical enquiry. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions, analyse a range of historical sources and evidence, and develop their own interpretations of the past. Lessons are carefully planned to ensure progression in both historical knowledge and disciplinary skills.

Across Spring Trust, our intent in teaching history is to inspire curiosity and engagement, enabling pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to make sense of the people, events and world around them, within an inclusive curriculum that reflects a range of voices and experiences.

## Geography

The aim of our geography curriculum is to make our children ‘geographers’. This requires children to have an understanding of human and physical processes, clear locational knowledge and fieldwork skills. Crucially, children should then be able to apply this knowledge to their own lives and beyond without judgement or stereotypes. This is increasingly pertinent due to the global geographical issues that our children face including climate change, mass migration, deforestation and sea level rise. We aim to ensure that we:



- Engage and inspire the children.
- Address the national curriculum objectives.
- Build skills, such as field work, comparison without bias, investigating and evaluating.
- Show clear progression and high expectations of subject knowledge.
- Broaden the cultural horizons of our children.
- Make excellent use of the geography resources within the school and our local area.

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## RE

In all schools across Spring Trust, the R.E. curriculum is designed to:

- Recognise children's prior learning.
- Provide first hand learning experiences.
- Allow the children to develop interpersonal skills.
- Build resilience.
- Teach children to become creative, critical thinkers who are respectful of a diverse range of views and choices that others might make.

The curriculum is planned to allow for careful progression of learning and skills, making links with previous learning including cross-curricular approaches and making meaningful connections to the modern day society in which we live.

Religious education encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging. It enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as British citizens in a pluralistic society and global community. Religious education has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice so we can all live in a world where there are strong virtues of respect and empathy for others whilst learning from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions.

## Music

“Music is a universal language that embodies one of the highest forms of creativity” (National Curriculum.)

At Spring Trust schools, we seek to inspire children to speak the universal language of music and to express themselves creatively. The music curriculum is designed to provide students with a rich and diverse musical education. Our approach empowers students to actively engage with music through performing, listening, reviewing and evaluating, allowing them to explore and appreciate music across various historical periods, genres, styles and traditions.

We collaborate with various music education providers to ensure a well-rounded and immersive musical education. Through partnerships with local music hubs, students benefit from expert instrumental teaching. Additionally, our class teachers integrate music education into their lessons using Charanga. To enhance instrumental experiences, we provide access to a diverse array of musical instruments, such as pBuzz, Wak-a-tube, recorders, glockenspiels, and Djembes. As children develop in their music journey, we incorporate technology into our lessons. Further to this, children have access to peripatetic lessons where they can learn amongst others: piano and brass instruments.

Our Music Curriculum holds ambitious aspirations for our students. The goal is to equip students with a broad range of musical experiences, both traditional and modern, facilitating the discovery of their unique musical passions and talents.

We hope that music will be an integral part of our students' development throughout their learning journey, enabling them to connect with others, build self-confidence and to go on to have a life-long love of music.

## Art & Design

We aim to provide an art curriculum that is purposeful and engages, inspires and challenges our pupils. The art curriculum has a focus on knowledge and progression of skills with topics being revisited throughout the key stages. Art for most children is a natural form of expression and a source of great pleasure. We aim to increase confidence and competence in the use of different media, such as pencil, charcoal, paint, collage, printing, inks, textiles and clay. Children are encouraged to take risks and experiment and then reflect. We promote the necessary skills for our children to develop their natural ability to be expressive and creative and we aim to instil pride by achieving finished work that is of a high standard. In addition, we expose children to the work of famous artists from across the ages and expose them to a variety of art work which allows them to develop their understanding of what 'art' is.

## DT

Through the teaching of Design and Technology, we develop creativity and imagination. In this practical subject, pupils are given the opportunity to design and make products with a purpose. Within the food technology units, children will learn about food safety, hygiene and healthy eating. Children learn to use and apply their knowledge and skills from mathematics, science, computing and art. The subject enables children to problem solve and take risks in a safe environment. Children develop confidence in selecting and using appropriate tools and materials. Our sequence of lessons follow a product design cycle through planning, creation and evaluation.

## PE

PE is a vital part of school life, which ultimately impacts both a child's physical, mental health and well-being. It can help to raise self-esteem, whilst teaching children the long-term benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle. The Spring Trust, aims to equip children with the necessary tools and understanding they need to make a positive impact on their own physical health and well-being, through a broad, balanced, challenging and inclusive physical education programme. We use the Real PE scheme to develop the fundamental skills needed to build confidence and develop skills for life.

Through PE we aim to develop the competence, creativity, performance and healthy lifestyle of all the children across the trust. Our curriculum aims to inspire the children to participate in a wide range of physical activities which will give them the confidence and resilience to compete against other schools. We work at building partnerships with local sports clubs and the community to increase participation outside school. Our goal is to raise the profile of PE, fitness and health so that it becomes a lifelong habit.

## Modern Foreign Languages

In years 3 to 6, our schools implement French or Spanish teaching through speaking, listening, singing and drama. Children listen to spoken language and show understanding by joining in and responding. Children engage in conversations, asking and answering questions and developing accurate pronunciations. At Spring Trust, we use the Language Angels programme to support the teaching of MFL.



## PSHE

At Spring Trust, our PSHE curriculum is designed in-house using guidance from the DfE and the PSHE Association. We aim to nurture the whole child by building resilience, confidence and emotional wellbeing, while celebrating differences and promoting positive relationships. Our carefully sequenced curriculum develops the knowledge, skills and attributes children need to navigate an ever-changing world and to feel safe, valued and empowered. To further strengthen pupils' life skills, we have introduced resources from the Just Finance Foundation, enabling our learners to develop a secure understanding of financial education, responsible decision-making and money management. Through rich discussion, purposeful learning experiences and opportunities to reflect, children learn to manage challenges, celebrate who they are and grow into compassionate, responsible and confident individuals.

We are delighted to be trialling the *My Happy Mind* programme at Leeson, St Mary Cray and Elmstead Wood Primary Schools. *My Happy Mind* is a science-based mental health and wellbeing curriculum designed to help children understand how their brains work, develop positive habits and build resilience, confidence and emotional regulation. Through weekly lessons, stories and practical strategies, children learn how to manage their emotions, celebrate their strengths and develop a healthy, optimistic mindset. This programme complements and enhances our existing PSHE curriculum by providing structured opportunities for pupils to explore wellbeing, self-awareness and positive relationships. We believe this trial will further support our aim of nurturing the whole child and promoting lifelong habits that help every learner to thrive.

## British Values

British values are encompassed into everything we do. Our lessons regularly involve choice, discussion and debate and we ensure that being a part of Britain, democracy, rule and law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance is built into our daily lives and routines. We ensure that our curriculum is broad so that it covers:

- Different religions.
- Important historical events both in Britain and further afield including slavery and the right to vote.
- National days of significance.

- Pupil voice groups.
- PSHE areas to teach acceptance and tolerance.
- Art and Literacy work influenced by a range of artists/writers.
- Work with the greater community
- Free choice

It is important to us that children do speak freely and learn to use their voice in safe surroundings where respect for different views are established and radical views challenged. Everyone in our Trust matters and so does their point of view, which is why British values are so important. From the beginning of the day where children are able to choose their own food options, to yearly events such as voting for the school's head boy and girl, the children understand the importance of these key values.

## SMSC - spiritual, moral, social and cultural development



We embed SMSC in everything we do by thinking carefully about our curriculum and the ways it can enrich these realms of the children's lives. To develop awareness in these areas, we explore different beliefs and experience other cultures, we promote respect for other faiths, we think about our feelings and values, we enjoy learning about ourselves, others and the surrounding world and we reflect on what we discover through discussion and debate. This is not achieved just through RE lessons but across the curriculum through whole day experiences such as our international day, visits to places of religious and cultural interest, cross curriculum links such as exploring social dilemmas or other cultures in literacy and assemblies.

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