



Simonside Primary School
Curriculum Implementation Policy
Reviewed October 2025

Rationale

Our expectation is that all pupils are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to consistently high levels of pupil achievement. This policy outlines the elements of daily practice which are key to raising and maintaining standards in teaching and learning. Our approach to implementing the curriculum is underpinned by the cognitive science of how children learn and evidence-based research. It applies the findings of cognitive science to daily classroom practice. Learning occurs when experiences, facts, and skills are permanently stored in long-term memory and can be recalled or used in the future. ‘Making learning stick’ is our aim at Simonside. This policy will outline how we do this.

Aims of the Curriculum

- Provide a broad and balanced education for all pupils.
- Enable pupils to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations.
- Support pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Support pupils’ physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active.
- Promote a positive attitude towards learning.
- Ensure equal access to learning, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support.
- Promote the learning and development of our youngest children and ensure they are ready for Key Stage 1.
- Prepare KS2 children for transition into KS3.
- Provide pupils with the knowledge and understanding needed to maintain emotional well-being and good mental health.
- Ensure pupils know how to stay safe.
- Ensure that pupils know their Rights and British Values and can use these to live their lives as responsible people.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of the [National Curriculum programmes of study](#), which all maintained schools in England must teach. It also covers the requirements of the Revised EYFS statutory framework 2025 for our Nursery and Reception children.

It reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education’s [Governance Handbook](#).

Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Governing Body (LGB)

The LGB will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

The LGB will also ensure that:

A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets.

Enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements.

Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements.

It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum.

It fulfils its role in processes to disapply pupils from all or part of the National Curriculum, where appropriate, and in any subsequent appeals.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met.

The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the LGB.

Where appropriate, the individual needs of some pupils are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from all or part of the National Curriculum.

They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate.

The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements.

The LGB is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum.

The LGB is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions.

Appropriate provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEND.

Teaching staff

Teaching staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy. Subject leaders will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the curriculum for their subject.

School Curriculum Drivers

The whole of our curriculum for our children from Nursery to Year 6 is infused by four main drivers. These have been chosen by staff and Governors to reflect the specific needs of our children:

1. Emotional Intelligence (How does the Curriculum provide for mental well-being?)

We strive to teach children how to recognise and manage their emotions in response to a wide range of scenarios and possible stress factors. We are committed to raising awareness of the importance of mental health and how to maintain good mental wellbeing.

2. Dreams (Aspirations)

We aim for children to have high expectations of themselves and to 'dream, believe and achieve' (school motto). We aim for children to be socially mobile and have the skills and knowledge to be whatever they would like to be. This also requires the need to widen horizons and experiences so that children have a full understanding of what they *could* do.

3. Knowledge and Understanding of the World (Cultural Capital)

This needs to be a significant focus. Many children experience significant socio-economic deprivation, and this often results in extremely limited knowledge and understanding of the world due to limited opportunities. Early Years practitioners place particular emphasis on this in their topic areas, taking opportunities to widen and deepen learning experiences.

4. Rights of the Child How does your curriculum reflect the culture, climate and values of your school?

As a Rights Respecting School (Gold Award) we instil the values associated with the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. This is embedded into our school ethos and School Charter. Reference to, and teaching on, the Rights is made throughout all teaching as appropriate including assemblies and through play. Play is a vital part of our curriculum through which opportunities are planned for children to understand how to respect rights.

[See the *Rights Respecting Policy* for the wide range of ways in which this Driver influences our curriculum.]

Planning and Organisation

(A) KEY ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. *Expectations of children will be high at all times.*

Cognitive science tells us that humans find thinking difficult. This does not mean that we lower our expectations of what children can achieve. Rather, we put into place measures which will reduce extraneous cognitive load so that children can focus their thinking and not be distracted by redundant information.

2. *Knowledge and Understanding of the World ('Cultural Capital') is vital for children to make progress from novice to expert.*

This is a **school curriculum driver**. Due to the socio-economic backgrounds of the majority of our children, it is recognised that school needs to play a significant role in improving children's knowledge and understanding of the world. To this end, we place huge emphasis on teaching vocabulary (words should be taught and not 'caught'). A strategic and consistent approach is taken to ensure that children in each year group learn 400 words a year. Each class also has a 'canon of works': challenging texts that children are exposed to. A longitudinal approach (daily drip-feeding) is taken to teaching certain aspects of geography and science e.g. location of countries. Opportunities are also provided for children to learn about the world through play. Hands-on, first-hand experiences allow children to explore, investigate, and make sense of their surroundings.

3. *Desirable difficulty is key to cementing success and providing appropriate challenge.*

Cognitive science tells us that we need to ensure children have 80% success in their work and 20% challenge. Increasing this level of challenge can result in low self-esteem, poor behaviour for learning and no transference of knowledge from working memory to long-term memory.

4. *Teaching needs to make links between the Long Term Memory and Short Term Memory.*

Teachers are trained to help pupils connect new learning with what they already know. Knowledge Organisers are used to frame learning in context.

(B) CURRICULUM DESIGN

Curriculum Design for Core Subjects: English, Mathematics and Science

Our school uses the National Curriculum as the foundation for curriculum design in English, Mathematics and Science. This provides a clear and ambitious framework that ensures all pupils are entitled to a broad, balanced and progressive education, underpinned by high expectations and equality of access.

Using the National Curriculum ensures that:

- Learning is coherently sequenced, building securely over time.
- Expectations are consistent and ambitious for all pupils.
- Pupils develop essential knowledge and skills for future learning and life beyond school.
- Teaching and assessment align with national statutory requirements.

Our curriculum builds upon the minimum entitlement through carefully chosen approaches and resources that enhance teaching and learning while maintaining fidelity to national expectations.

Across all core subjects, curriculum design is guided by the following principles:

- Knowledge-rich and ambitious
- Sequential and cumulative
- Inclusive and adaptive
- Evidence-informed
- Responsive to assessment

Simonside Primary school uses the Chris Quigley curriculum as a basis for most non-core subjects, which in turn is based on the statutory 2014 Curriculum. For each subject area of the curriculum, teachers use the following:

Breadth of Study: This lists the statutory content of the curriculum which needs to be covered for each Key Stage. This content has been grouped to create topics for each year group. The varied content of each topic is designed to provide **breadth of learning** for each child.

Concepts: These underpin all teaching and are therefore repeated over and over again with each topic providing a different context. This is designed to provide **depth** to children's learning.

Milestones: These are the 'end goal' for each 2 year phase. Within each Milestone children will be at one of three levels: Basic, Advancing or Deep. **The focus is on 'making learning stick'**. (This also gives a framework for assessment so we can track children's achievements). The style of teaching used for each of these levels will be matched to the ability level; ranging from intensive instruction and modelling, to independent tasks followed by immediate feedback, to discovery learning.

Characteristics: These reflect our **high expectations** of what we wish children to be able to do.

How have you decided on the breadth of experiences you provide?

Class teachers/phase teams/phase leaders work in collaboration to produce Long Term Plans which ensure full coverage of the curriculum. In addition, further topics/areas of study are incorporated in order to meet the specific needs of children in our school. These are heavily influenced by the school curriculum drivers. From the Long Term Plans, teachers create Medium Term Topic Plans which are designed to teach full schemas of knowledge. These are built up by trying to make links between subject areas where possible. Episodic learning is incorporated e.g. educational visits, playtime activities, visitors to school. These are designed to 'hook' children's interest, make memories, and fill gaps in knowledge and understanding. (However, the long-term learning limitations of episodic learning is accounted for by staff.) The Rights of the Child, British Values and Staying Safe are all incorporated into planning.

EYFS

The curriculum planning for EYFS is necessarily different however follows the same ethos with our chosen school curriculum drivers at its core. The 'Milestones' equivalent are the age banded Development Matters statements from the EYFS non-guidance framework and ultimately work towards the Early Learning Goals to be achieved by the end of Reception year in the EYFS statutory framework. Key concepts/ learning objectives are taken from 7 key areas of learning covering the whole curriculum. Staff use the development matters statements from across the areas to plan topic webs that have a thoroughly cross curricular approach.

Reducing Extraneous Cognitive Load

Which innovations have you pioneered in designing your curriculum?

A whole school approach is taken in implementing teaching ideas which are designed to reduce cognitive load (so children can learn more), widen knowledge of vocabulary, and improve knowledge and understanding of the world.

Rural and urban settings.

Each class 'adopts' two settings: one urban; one rural. E.g. Hadrian's wall (rural) and Dean Street, Newcastle (urban). This gives children two settings which they can use in their writing whenever needed (reducing cognitive load).

In EYFS adults start from the children's own experiences of life and the area in which they live. Nursery children then learn about the wider world through carefully planned themes linked to stories. Reception children learn about their own environment and then about another 2 contrasting environments of Africa and the Arctic. They then make comparisons between them.

Over the primary phase, the cultural capital and vocabulary will accumulate so that by Y6 children have a large 'bank' of knowledge from which to choose ideas and be creative.

Class Dashboard.

Daily routines are adapted by year group but typically include the date and weather. In KS2, this may extend to recording temperature in Celsius and Fahrenheit, helping pupils link how weather feels to measured data. KS1 focuses on seasons, changes in weather, and daylight hours, while EYFS emphasises days of the week, months of the year, and daily weather observations.

Each classroom also displays a large world map. In KS2, pupils research and locate extreme weather events. In KS1, the focus is on identifying continents, oceans, seas, and countries. In EYFS, children use

a globe to distinguish land and sea, locate the UK, and make simple comparisons with other countries explored through topics (e.g. animals in the Arctic and Africa). *Canon of works.*

Knowledge and Skills

For each subject area within a topic plan, teachers identify what it is that they wish children to learn – what it is that they really need to ‘make stick’. Key questions are devised, recorded and shared with children so that class teachers, subject co-ordinators and senior leaders can monitor and assess learning. This is done within a Knowledge Organiser. Children can also self-assess their learning. These key questions are used some time after the topic has been taught in order to assess transference from working memory to long term memory.

Subject leaders are responsible for ensuring skills progression in their subject. They equip class teachers with a skills progression framework to be used in building schemas of understanding. It is recognised that transference from working memory to procedural long-term memory requires plenty of practice.

(C) LESSONS (What does daily practice look like?)

All lessons in our school should include the following key elements to ensure high quality teaching and learning. Teachers will receive support and CPD opportunities to ensure they fully understand these elements and to enable them to embed these strategies in their everyday practice.







All lessons are underpinned by clear objectives and success criteria, ensuring a shared understanding of learning expectations. Teaching is carefully adapted so that all pupils can access the curriculum while being appropriately challenged. Pupils are actively engaged in their learning, supported through regular and purposeful feedback that moves learning forward. The effective deployment of additional adults further enhances provision, enabling targeted support and greater responsiveness to individual needs.

Lesson Structure

Lessons are made up of four main elements:

1. Set the scene, place learning in a wider context, link to prior learning, review previous learning, provide the ‘big picture’, share objectives and learning outcomes.
2. Pupils are taught new information (instruction/exposition).
3. Pupils make sense of information (processing/understanding).
4. Review information and plan next steps.

In order to incorporate all four elements, we plan ‘6 phases of a lesson’:

Connect 	Explain 	Example 	Attempt 	Apply 	Challenge 
Activate prior learning	Instruct vocabulary Explain core concepts	High-quality modelling Explicit direct instruction (My turn)	Guided practice Gradually reduce scaffold (Our turn)	Independent practice Application of new concept (Your turn)	Deepen understanding Sophisticate thinking



The phases are not always sequential. Good teachers give lots of opportunity for children to assimilate and rehearse new information before applying it.

“It is not enough simply to present students with new material, because the material will be forgotten unless there is sufficient rehearsal. An important finding from information-processing research is that students need to spend additional time rephrasing, elaborating, and summarising new material in order to store this material in their long-term memory. When the rehearsal time is too short, students are less able to store, remember, or use the material...it is relatively easy to place something in a filing cabinet, but it can be very difficult to recall where exactly we placed it. Rehearsal helps us remember where we filed it, so we can access it with ease when needed.” (Rosenshine).

Teaching and learning are not the same thing. While inextricably linked, they are separate processes. This must be reflected in the lesson.

Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

More knowledgeable pupils

Pupils with low prior attainment

Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds

Pupils with SEND

Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEND policy.

Monitoring Arrangements

Governors monitor coverage of National Curriculum subjects and compliance with other statutory requirements through:

- *Learning Walks*
- *Pupil Book Studies*
- *Pupil interviews*
- *Subject-coordinator/SLT interviews*
- *Subject- coordinator/SLT reports*
- *SLT-led work scrutinies*

Subject leaders/SLT monitor the way subjects are taught throughout the school by:

- *Learning walks*
- *Pupil Book Studies*
- *Lesson observations*
- *Team meetings*
- *Moderation meetings*
- *Work scrutiny*
- *Pupil interviews*