

E-ACT's Great Western Curriculum Intent Statement



To provide our children with a broad and balanced, knowledge-rich mastery curriculum which incorporates carefully selected knowledge and skills. Our curriculum is brought to life in a way that is meaningful and exciting for pupils; promoting a life-long love of learning. It also provides the cultural capital that they will need to be successful in learning as well as in their future lives; Opening minds, opening doors.

Our curriculum has been organised to enable pupils to revisit and master knowledge and build depth of understanding. It is also designed to help pupils learn more and remember more through regular review and re-visiting of core knowledge and key concepts. Pupils will forge strong pathways in their schema which will help them to understand and make sense of new knowledge and skills.

Knowledge is broken down into composites and components so that underpinning knowledge can be mastered and put together confidently and securely. Through the way our curriculum is organised, we help pupils make meaning of the world, develop their vocabulary and broaden, deepen and enhance their experiences and knowledge.

Each subject is knowledge-rich, with content carefully selected and deliberately ambitious. Our curriculum is coherent and well planned, building on what has come before and encourages pupils to be curious about their learning.

Every subject has clear progression in disciplines through both substantive and disciplinary knowledge but also through six core themes that run through geography and history in each year group. This provides cohesive, powerful knowledge which enables children to compare and contrast different aspects of learning in a range of contexts. In addition, this provides children with the firm foundations that allows them to be successful within our locality and further afield.

Our curriculum inspires learning both inside and outside of the classroom and promotes our belief that all children are lifelong learners who will ask questions, are independent learners and collaborate well.

Through the curriculum, we reinforce our E-ACT values: We can achieve anything by thinking big! we create a respectful school by having team spirit, and we believe in always doing the right thing. These underpin all that we do in developing and implementing our curriculum with moral purpose and core values. We ensure that all children will leave our school with core values and attributes that will make them an asset to society and provide the foundations of future learning.

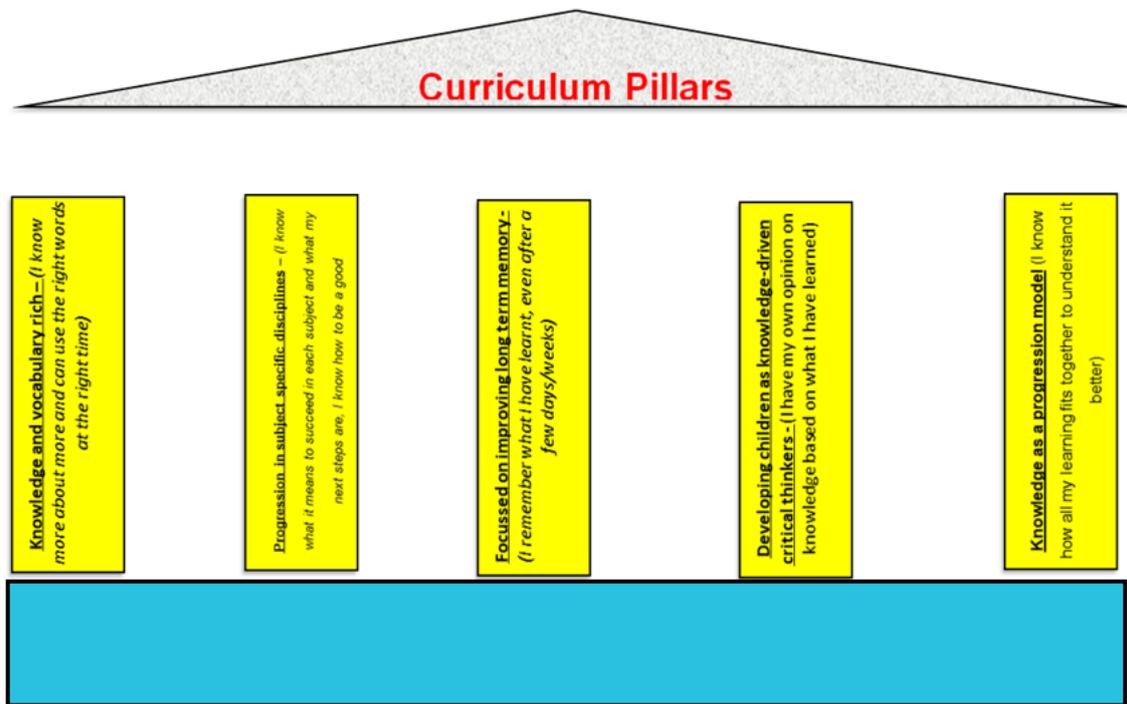
We believe in an inclusive approach, underpinned by our mastery curriculum. All lessons follow a clear sequence allowing opportunities for deliberate practise and memory recall; we ensure challenge for all pupils, including through encouraging pupils to make connections across subjects, content, time and place. We work hard to remove any barriers to learning and enable all pupils to reach their potential, no matter their starting point and background.

We place a strong emphasis on providing our pupils with rich authentic learning experiences closely linked to the curriculum they learn – for example, trips to the birthplace of Shakespeare, to the Isle of Wight to learn how to sail, and to see first-hand the seaside, forests, our capital city etc. While this is important for all our pupils, it is especially so for our disadvantaged pupils; to expand their horizons and broaden life experience. We work with the community to offer a range of high-quality learning experiences, such as an inter-generational project with the early years.

We structure the curriculum to best support learning, including a focus on working memory and helping pupils to retain core knowledge in their long-term memory. We cultivate this through a teaching and learning ethos with active awareness of CLT, and making use of teaching strategies such as dual coding.

Assessment opportunities are carefully planned so that they are purposeful, support learning and provide information about pupils' learning of the curriculum. Assessment is crucial to the evaluation of the effectiveness of lesson delivery and the impact of curriculum as the progression model. Our approach includes both low-stakes, informal assessments alongside more formal assessments, including using pupil voice as a means to avoid assumptions about what children know and can understand. A programme of continuous quality assurance is in place to ensure that the curriculum intent and implementation are effective.

E-ACT's Great Western Curriculum Pillars



Our curriculum pillars are the principles that form our curriculum. They are explained in further detail below.

Knowledge and vocabulary rich – (I know more about more and can use the right words at the right time)

Knowledge Rich ~ Vocabulary Rich ~ Breadth of Content ~ Sticky Knowledge ~ Building Schemas

“No fact exists in a vacuum: everything we learn is connected to something else we know. And, the more things we know, the more connections there are. People who have extensive knowledge bases have significantly more possible connections available to them. Rather than inhibiting creativity, a knowledge-rich curriculum makes creativity possible, for one has more chance of creating new ideas if one has more raw material with which to start.” Michael Fordham
“Those children who possess intellectual capital when they first arrive at school have the mental scaffolding and Velcro to catch hold of what is going on and they can turn that new knowledge into still more knowledge. But those children who arrive at school lacking the relevant experience and vocabulary – they see not, neither do they understand. They fall further and further behind.” E.D.Hirsch (2011)

We recognise that knowledge begets knowledge. Students connect what they learn to what they already know. Because of this, our decisions about what we want pupils to learn matter, and so the knowledge content of our curriculum is carefully chosen by subject leads. We are passionate about ensuring that knowledge is at the heart of our curriculum development. We want the curriculum to be filled with high quality opportunities to engage in ambitious knowledge and vocabulary that challenge the stereotypical narrative about gender, civilisation, roles and geography portrayed through modern day misconceptions.

The knowledge has been carefully selected and chosen purposefully to contextualise and develop the children's understanding of the world we live in. We plan for a breadth of content but we want children to have more than a general sense of a topic; we want them to gain and retain specific and rich subject knowledge. Knowledge acquisition is built upon or assimilated with existing schema. We recognise that “sticky knowledge” is crucial for children turning new knowledge into more knowledge. We plan for this, respecting the difference between core knowledge (the most important knowledge that we want children to remember) and Hinterland knowledge (the knowledge we teach that makes it memorable) and considering when both are appropriate. We recognise that factual knowledge must precede skill because thinking well (critically, analytically, evaluatively) requires knowing a rich background of contextual facts – students need these to think *about*.

This will be aided by ambitiously selected subject rich vocabulary that will expand the children's oral dictionary and enable them to use high levels of technical terminology to communicate the knowledge they have gained. This knowledge and vocabulary will not be assumed as embedded and there will be regular subject leader interactions with the children and

conferencing to assess their vocabulary and knowledge verbally in order to continually develop the subject. To ascertain the children's ability to reason, contextualise and contrast the knowledge with what they already know about the world.

Progression in subject specific disciplines – *(I know what it means to succeed in each subject and what my next steps are, I know how to be a goodHistorian/geographer)*

Respecting subject disciplines ~ Teaching disciplinary knowledge ~ Empowering children “We are musicians etc.” ~ Reading comprehension as a focus for assessment and application

‘Powerful knowledge is powerful because it provides the best understanding of the natural and social worlds that we have and helps us go beyond our individual experiences.... knowledge is powerful if it predicts, if it explains, if it enables you to envisage alternatives’

Michael Young, 2014

“Because I know these things, I can think about them. And because I can think about them, I can draw links between them and combine them in interesting ways.”

Didau, ‘Making kids cleverer’ (2019)

We acknowledge the difference between substantive knowledge (the ‘facts’ of a subject), disciplinary knowledge (what we know about where these facts come from) and procedural knowledge (how to do things), incorporating them all into our plans. We have placed a high importance on ensuring progression is central to our curriculum development and have prioritised the uniqueness of subject disciplines. Each subject is very different in its pedagogical theory and approach and we want to reflect this in the way we show knowledge progression in our curriculum. We teach each subject discretely with an emphasis on children understanding what it is to be a historian, scientist, geographer and musician, for example. We have organised our curriculum so that the subjects are in blocks and taught collectively with other subjects, allowing us to focus on key knowledge and skills of the specific subject. This ensures that the unique contribution that individual subjects make to a child's knowledge and understanding of the world is foremost in our curriculum thinking, but also inspires and equips children to deepen their own thinking. We want to ensure that the knowledge and the subject specific skills are sequenced with a purposeful aim to continue to build on from the children's current schema. We recognise that each subject has both a substantive and disciplinary knowledge base, and have reflected this in the design of our curriculum. By applying a spiral approach focused on fluency of knowledge we can ensure that recapping prior knowledge and overlearning typifies the way we carefully layer new knowledge seamlessly from what has been previously learnt in each subject. Our curriculum aims to establish learning from a very localised and recent (relevant) starting point and develop their knowledge progressively further from their domain. Through utilising key themes (big ideas) in key subjects we aim to deliver progressive core and powerful knowledge that will allow children to access learning beyond their own experiences.

Focused on improving long term memory - *(I remember what I have learnt, even after a few days or weeks)*

Vertically integrated ~ Emphasis on long-term memory ~ Focus on mastery ~ Assessment as a tool for recall ~ Explicit links between topics ~ Building year on year ~ Themes weaving through

“The big mistake we have made...is to assume that if we want students to be able to think, then our curriculum should give our students lots of practice in thinking. This is a mistake, because what our students need is more to think with. The main purpose of curriculum is to build up the content of long-term memory so that when students are asked to think, they are able to think in more powerful ways because what is in their long-term memories makes their short-term memories more powerful. That is why curriculum matters.”

Dylan Wiliam

We know that long-term memory is, theoretically, limitless and because of this we have high expectations for our children's learning. We acknowledge that teaching needs to build up pupils' store of knowledge in long-term memory because progress is *knowing more and remembering more*. We exploit the way knowledge is held in schema to help pupils make meaning and develop their understanding and comprehension. We carefully order and connect our curriculum as we recognise that strong sequencing is essential for knowledge to be stored in long-term memory as pupils make links and remember key knowledge long-term:

- Our rich knowledge content is organised in a way to ensure that it builds year on year and constructs firm foundations from which children can build conceptual understanding.
- Our curriculum is sequenced within each year, to build and revisit knowledge, using assessment to help pupils to recall and apply knowledge they have learnt.
- Within the medium term, we plan sequences of lessons that build on previous knowledge. Careful curriculum thinking ensures the right components are embedded in long-term memory to enable pupils to perform more complex tasks (composites). We judge challenge in terms of curricular goals rather than general categories of activity used in a lesson.
- Within individual lessons, activities focus pupils' thinking on the learning goals and avoid overloading their working memory. Our lessons are broken down into relevant components which will be mastered in order for the children to meet

their composite learning goals. Our lessons incorporate fundamental knowledge and skills, allowing the pupils to build on firm foundations.

Throughout our teaching, we make links to past and future learning explicit and link it to a current learning. We use repeated recall to develop fluency or automaticity – aiming to take pupils well beyond the point of accuracy. We help pupils see ‘big ideas’ and threads through the curriculum, ensuring this happens when new material is encountered. We also make connections across subject domains, as part of the wider curriculum. We want our pupils to think rather than memorise facts. The key themes (big ideas) in geography, history, science and RE allow us to provide regular opportunities to compare, contrast debate and reflect on what has come before and what has happened since. Through regularly revisiting learning and building on it though complex concepts children are able to refine and develop their understanding on, multiple levels enabling them to retain, recall and apply their knowledge.

Developing children as knowledge-driven critical thinkers - (I have my own opinion on knowledge based on what I have learned)

Diversive curiosity ~ Epistemic curiosity ~ Relevance to the children’s context and lives ~ Building identity ~ challenging stereotype ~ Thinking critically about the world they live in

“What makes knowledge rich is how it is organised. Knowledge is organised into subjects and disciplines which have their own ways of interrogating the world. It is organised by values – how we feel about the world and what is important to us. It is organised by narratives within and across subjects and disciplines.... Knowledge is the stuff we marshal to help us to find a place in this world. Which is why knowledge on its own is not enough. Curriculum is the organisation of knowledge. It should help children to understand different ways of making meaning and responding to the world.”
Martin Robinson, ‘Curriculum: Athena versus the machine’ (2019)

Through our curriculum we want the children to be challenged to not only learn, but to think. All aspects of the knowledge within our curriculum has been designed to challenge stereotypes, stereotypical narratives, common misconceptions and outdated views, supported by clear knowledge through an enquiry-based approach. This is to allow the children to not just use the knowledge to improve their understanding but be able to then give their perspectives and viewpoints based on what they have learned and what they believe.

Every topic and learning sequence will be started with a Big question (hook) that will challenge the children’s domain knowledge (basic understanding) and any existing misconceptions, including those they may have gained through the internet, media and other routes. Through carefully constructed component learning sequences the children will have the opportunity to not only articulate and present the facts they have retained but also where their opinion lies within the Big question. By explaining their views on the question they will be showing their understanding of the powerful knowledge delivered throughout the topic and will be forming their own view of the world. We do not intend to give our children an answer or pre-determined perspective, more so to simply facilitate them forming their own opinions supported by fact and research.

The further aim here is to equip pupils with the knowledge and understanding so they are increasingly able to be critical consumers of information, able to weigh and contrast evidence and to ask enquiry questions. The aim is to develop young citizens who will not take at face value information they receive – a critical attribute in the 21st century and digital age, questioning everything so they can be the creator of the next idea that changes the way we live and exist within the modern world. As recent events in Bristol and elsewhere nationally and internationally have shown, it is critically important for the curriculum to provide pupils with a balanced, rich and objective view of the world.

Learning to think critically may be one of the most important skills that today's children will need for the future, but critical thinking can only take place within a broad and secure knowledge base in a range of subject domains. In today’s global and rapidly changing world, children need to be able to do much more than repeat a list of facts; they need to be critical thinkers who can make sense of information, analyse, compare, contrast, make inferences, and generate higher order thinking skills.

We want our curriculum to inspire the children to develop a lifelong interest and curiosity for learning. We recognise the difference between diversive curiosity (wondering) and epistemic curiosity (wanting to know more). To inspire diversive curiosity, we plan exciting hooks in each unit including visits and visitors, educational trips and interesting resources. We use stories as a teaching tool, both to respond to children’s curiosity and because we know that they are especially memorable for the human mind. We appreciate the challenge to encourage epistemic curiosity and the effort that it requires from children. Our rich curriculum with its focus on building schemas using sticky knowledge, planning for long term memory, and empowering children within subject disciplines, all aim to increase the children’s desire to know more, raise their aspirations and make meaning of the world for themselves.

A rich, meaningful curriculum mobilises young people and facilitates social change. Through our plans and teaching, we link our curriculum to the children’s context and their lives in South Bristol. We recognise that children learn more when they see themselves in their learning, and we plan our curriculum to embrace diversity and provide a sense of belonging and identity for all of our children. Our teachers are asked to change and tailor plans for the individuals in their class. This not only ensures that we

build on the children's pre-existing schema but also encourages each child to make meaning of the world and grow their own sense of self and identity, whilst developing respect for others'.

Knowledge as a progression model (I know how all my learning fits together to understand it better)

**Cohesion and Connection of knowledge ~ Mastery Approach ~ Knowledge as Component Parts ~ Knowledge Organisers
~ Enjoyment and Engagement**

"We want children to connect the past, present and future. To link the then time to the now time with a view to impacting on future time." (Debra Kidd)

We not only want the children to be exposed to clear progression through subject specific curriculum areas but also in the essence of knowledge as an entirety. Our curriculum allows tangible and mutually beneficial cohesion to happen between the subjects. Each element of knowledge and sequence of learning have been carefully designed to immerse the child in a topic whilst ensuring that knowledge progression within all curriculum areas is clear. Fundamental assessment and next steps are made within all subjects to ensure children are able to say within any curricular discipline what is needed to improve. The curriculum will enable all children no matter how developed their schema is, to access and relate to the knowledge being delivered and engage and enjoy learning. The children will leave our school with a universal understanding of each curriculum area in its individuality but also in how they cohesively come together to enhance conceptual understanding. By breaking knowledge down into explicit component parts, we are able to demonstrate our mastery approach to learning by ensuring that every single component part of knowledge is afforded the time and focus to be mastered towards the completion of the composite. By using knowledge organisers as a method of developing consistent domain knowledge before a topic begins we are then able to clearly establish gaps in learning that can be targeted through pre-teaching to enable all children to fully engage with the learning process.