



Discovery Academy Curriculum Policy

What the curriculum is designed to do

At Discovery Academy, we believe that children learn their best when they are showing the Academy values of **Discovering, Inspiring, Caring, Improving and Achieving** within our curriculum. We believe in aspiration for all so want to create a world where the sky is the limit for all of our pupils; building pathways for all and focusing on personal and academic success and eventually progress to successful employment.

By using the National Curriculum, and individualising planning to meet the needs of our children and community we endeavor to create curious, life-long learners at our academy with a thirst for knowledge and learning. We provide a broad, rich, relevant and meaningful curriculum and create engaging learning journeys and lessons that allow our learners to flourish. It is for this reason by the time children leave Discovery Academy, that they will have a love of learning for life as we are committed to nurturing young: writers, performers, mathematicians, scientists, historians, geographers, artists, designers, theologians, musicians, linguists, sports persons and computer users. Children are actively encouraged to follow their passions whilst becoming holistic learners, well-equipped to reach their full potential.

How the school intends to deliver the curriculum throughout the school

We are proud of our rich and varied curriculum, which enables children not only to excel in reading, writing, maths, science and computing, but also develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in other subjects. We also have taken a great deal of time exploring exactly what we teach and ensuring that we have a rationale that meets the needs of our learners and their cultural capital.

Taking into account the expansion of and changing demographic of Hattersley, alongside its proximity to Hyde where there is a large Asian population, we felt it pertinent to acknowledge the BAME community throughout the curriculum. This is done in all year groups and within a wide range of subjects; one of our key aims was to have balanced representation and for children to encounter those from the BAME community in all domains - not just in the context of fighting for civil rights. By doing this, we will allow the children at Discovery have a deep and rich understanding of other cultures that will stay with them for a lifetime. Examples of this include a study of 10th Century Baghdad (Y6 History); Walter Tull (Y2 History); an exploration of Lagos (Y2 Geography); Indian cuisine (Y5 Design Technology); and space through Neil Degras Tyson (Y5 Science).

The second key theme threaded throughout the curriculum is that of inspirational women. We have acknowledged the lack of representation of females within the majority of subject areas – particularly Science – and can see the impact that this has upon not only on children stereotyping genders by jobs but also how it quells aspirations. Therefore, we have ensured there is representation of females across the entire curriculum so that the children at Discovery do not associate topics or careers by gender. Examples of this can be seen through

a study of Cathy Freeman (Y4 history); examining the materials of Tricia Carmichael (Y1 Science); the role model of Alex Scott (Y1 PE); exploring how women are viewed and treated within religions (Y5 Religious Education); and the textile work of Carolina Herrera (Y4 Art).

The final cornerstone that we felt would meet the needs of the cultural capital of the children at Discovery Academy is understanding the value of education and the way in which it can empower. Within our local community, we have a high percentage of the population (when compared to the national average) that fall under the category of NEET (not in education, employment or training). Alongside this, 47% of the children on the Hattersley estate are living in poverty. To readdress this imbalance, we feel it is vital for the children to comprehend how education can set someone free and enable them to have greater opportunities in the future. This element is embedded throughout everything we do and the values that all of our staff promote. It culminates in our Year 6 thematic history study of education throughout the ages, where children see the impact progressive education systems have had over time.

As part of our curriculum, we feel it is paramount that our children are up-to-date on current issues – particularly those that they are enthused by. Embedded into our current curriculum is the theme of Climate Change, meaning in KS1 the children question and explore the importance of our oceans. In KS2, the children look at how to use recyclable resources effectively and explore protest movements around the issue. This was done as it became apparent that this was an issue that our learners seem particularly passionate about.

History and Geography, are used to 'lead' our different half termly topics. Whilst core subjects like Science and Computing can either support or be discrete. Other subjects such as Art, DT and music may use this theme to create context to learn skills.

In KS1 and 2, we use question stems, such as "Is Britain a better place because of the Roman invasion?" or "How can we create a sustainable planet?" It is understood that these questions won't be answered in full until the end of the topic. This should result in a piece of writing to evidence the learning.

The National Curriculum gives purpose and provides us with an important benchmark. Within an integrated delivery of the National Curriculum, the school uses the core curriculum areas of English and mathematics, science and computing as a basis for its broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum. This curriculum includes all the other subject areas of Design Technology, Art, PE, Music, History and Geography as well as PSHE and RE and in Key Stage 2 Spanish. Our half-termly topics are well constructed with knowledge and skills intertwined. Our teachers have organised each half-terms learning under a theme, with a particular subject "leading" this. Our approach is to maximise cross-curricular learning so that our pupils see their learning to be relevant and meaningful so that they can put their learning in to context. To enable our children to make connections between and within subjects, whilst broadening their skills and knowledge simultaneously, skill development may be physical or cognitive: skills matter and can't be separated from knowledge. Whilst the core subjects are taught on a regular basis the foundation subjects may sometimes be taught as blocks of work over a matter of weeks.

At Discovery Academy, we aim to develop a broad understanding of, and respect for, people of all faiths, including those with alternative or no faith. We provide opportunities to develop relationships with local religious leaders and places of worship. We aim to enrich children's

religious and spiritual experiences through well planned lessons, delivered in an interesting and varied way. The RE curriculum has been designed to give the children a broad overview of individual religions in KS1. Once the children have gained this knowledge, they will then begin to compare and analyse deeper theological questions in KS2 across different belief systems – for example answering the question ‘Does a belief in life after death help believers lead a good life?’ RE is often taught as a discrete subject.

PSHE is at the forefront of everything that we do at Discovery. We understand that school is not just a place to thrive academically but also socially. As a result of this, PSHE is intrinsic in every aspect of our curriculum as well as taught as a standalone subject. In addition to this, Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning, British Values and Citizenship is enhanced by the use of Picture News, weekly themed assemblies and direct teaching and discussion opportunities. The mental health and wellbeing of our pupils is paramount to their academic development and within each year group and there is a strong focus on mental health education in order to raise awareness and reduce stigma. Staff receive an appropriate level of training in mental health to assist in early detection, prevention and intervention with pupil mental health issues. The pupils have access to worry monsters, restorative reflection logs, anger management programmes as well as a nurture room and the use of animals as therapy. PSHE is also a specific lesson

Sex and Relationships Education is taught at an appropriate level to each year group. The content of the curriculum is shared with parents regularly to ensure they are informed and comfortable with the content of the sessions. Whilst currently not a statutory element of the curriculum, we believe that modern society demands the need for children to be informed of facts/risks at an early age.

Our pupils need opportunity to develop their subject-specific vocabulary and expand their vocabulary through a language rich curriculum with strong links to quality texts. Teacher’s use and explicit teaching of language provides an important model for children’s vocabulary development. Discovery Academy uses the Word Aware approach to teach planned vocabulary in all areas of the curriculum. By exposing the children to the use of sophisticated words, we promote students’ vocabulary growth and word consciousness. This in turn inspires our children’s engagement with reading and writing.

The school aims to celebrate and encourage the achievements of each individual pupil and hold a weekly achievement assembly to celebrate the whole child

Regular assessment and testing of children’s learning and understanding will take place through your child’s school career. The teachers will use the information gathered from this testing to ensure there is an appropriate match of work to ability and expected age related outcomes. We use ongoing assessment to check pupils’ understanding. We use the information captured to identify gaps in pupils’ knowledge, skills and depth of understanding, and also to inform future curriculum design. This is a reflective process, linking the needs of the children in our school. All staff are included in these curriculum decisions to ensure that Discovery Academy has a shared vision.

Our practice is inclusive: the needs of the individual are catered for as a high priority. We work hard on developing a whole school emotional literacy and a vocabulary that supports this, so that children know that even though teaching is delivered in whole class, large group, small

group and one to one, this is done for the best interest of the individual and everyone gets the opportunity to learn via the style that best suits them.

The school sets homework for the children, and we hope parents and carers will support us in helping their child by arranging a suitable time and place for home study, which is an important part of preparation for Secondary School in later years. This includes weekly work on reading, spelling and number facts. To inspire, challenge and enthuse future learning opportunities, we set homework projects ahead of each half-term linked to the child's next class topic, this often acts as a hook to future learning.

When children leave Discovery Academy at the end of Year 6, they should be equipped with the full range of skills that enables them to become lifelong learners. Through our unique approach of teaching and living out British Values, and our academy values, children are also equipped with the social skills and understanding to become good citizens in the future. We aim to enable all children to reach their potential and nurture them into good citizens, conscious of their responsibilities to each other, their family, society and the world of work.

How the school involves parents, pupils and the local community in curriculum planning and delivery

We believe that the school/parent relationship is key to promoting learning beyond the school gates and crucial in ensuring children make the best possible progress. We pride ourselves on our open, friendly and approachable nature that encourages parents to be involved in their children's learning. Furthermore, we host regular evenings to inform parents about how they can support their child or even to allow them to work alongside their child, for example phonics, SATs, e-safety and cooking etc.

We seek to create opportunities for children to experience and excel in a range of activities that enhance and extend the National Curriculum. Children have opportunities both inside and outside the classroom eg theme days and workshops, a variety of sporting events, walks in and around the local area, visiting speakers and much more. We plan regular trips to the local area and beyond that are tightly linked to our curriculum. We visit Lytham St Anne's, Manchester City Center, the theatre and use the local environment wherever possible to enhance the children's experiences. Where visits are not available we use visitors and workshops to enhance learning. Visitors have included MCFC, The Queen and her Court, Professor Bubbles and Science Dome. We aim to provide our children with enriched activities and create lasting memories via real experiences. We offer a range of trips and visits to complement and enhance the learning in school.*

We engage with the wider community by ensuring there are opportunities for pupils to participate in community projects, e.g. litter picking. We embed each project within the curriculum into the relevant subjects, e.g. creating art out of litter and investigating the effects litter has on the environment. This shows pupils the value of protecting and being involved in their community and establishes a link between the theories they learn in the classroom to practical examples in real life. The Academy also has links with local businesses and community groups such as Hattersley Community Big Garden Project, Onward Housing and Kerry Foods and take part in local events such as litter picking and recycling.

In addition to the school curriculum, we aim to provide a range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. (Board games, football, sport, running, dance, Lego, book club). We also aim to participate in local activities and tournaments whenever the opportunity arises.

*Currently, due to Covid-19 restrictions, we are unable to have as many visitors or external experiences as normal. We are still enhancing the children's learning through our subject days and using exciting hooks & experiences on the school site wherever possible.

How the curriculum benefits pupils' learning and personal development

Our curriculum has been designed for a range of learners, providing equal opportunities for all – by doing this, pupils will benefit in the following ways:

- Learning how to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- Understanding that failure is part of the road to success
- Being rewarded for academic successes
- Being supported with their next stages in education or training and feeling prepared for life after school
- Becoming responsible individuals who contribute to community living and the environment
- Achieving to the best of their ability
- Acquiring a wealth of knowledge and experience
- Becoming critical thinkers
- Finding a sense of belonging to the school and its community
- Learning how to cooperate with their peers and respect one another inside and outside the classroom.
- Understanding the aim for equality and the value of equity
- Nurturing a love and value of education that will last a lifetime