

School Curriculum Statement

Governors' statement of approval

Having read the Devon Curriculum Statement, we are all in agreement that Seaton School will endeavour to follow the advice as set out within this policy document and include the National Curriculum Programme of Studies and Attainment Targets within its curriculum.

Aims and principles of the Devon Statement

to develop lively, enquiring minds, together with a positive wish to learn, to question and to argue rationally, and to apply themselves intelligently to tasks;

to develop positive qualities of human feeling, and imagination, and an appreciation of human achievement and endeavour;

to experience the satisfactions of creativity;

to acquire knowledge and skills relevant in a changing world to their adult lives at work and at leisure;

to respect the religious, spiritual and moral values of others, and to consider thoughtfully their own attitudes, values and beliefs;

to understand the history and present condition of their own society and the world in which they live, and the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations;

to develop a sense of self-respect and individual worth, a capacity to live as independent, self-motivated adults, and the ability to live and work in co-operation with others.

The curriculum should be broad and balanced, in the sense that sufficient time is allowed for adequate development in each area, and coherent in that different curriculum areas must reinforce and complement one another. In addition, each curriculum area should be relevant to the experience and needs of pupils and the curriculum as a whole should be structured so as to allow progression in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding.

The authority believes that what is said in this document must be used not only as part of the set criteria for the evaluation of the curriculum, but also as part of the context of the entire education provided within the county's schools and colleges.

Strategies for teaching and learning should ensure that pupils acquire the skills, concepts and knowledge which they will need for subsequent learning and in adult life. It is important, moreover, that teaching styles encourage the development of positive attitudes to study and learning and of personal qualities such as adaptability and independence of mind. Learning how to learn is, in a rapidly changing world, as important as what is actually learnt.

No pupil should be denied access to any area of the curriculum because of sex discrimination. The authority believes, too, that a concern for equal opportunities should go beyond the basic legal consideration. It should involve, for example, a conscious determination to review present organisational and pedagogic practices so as to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to realise his/her potential in every part of the curriculum. This will often demand positive action if the effects of stereotyped attitudes and expectations are to be overcome.

It is, in the same way, important that schools prepare pupils for life in a world where they will meet, live and work with fellow citizens from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds, whether regional or national. This means that prejudices must be recognised for what they are and that as far as is possible, education in Devon must neutralise any effect which prejudices may have in damaging children's and young people's developing sense of community and interdependence. Against this broad background, it is important to plan an approach to multi-cultural education which will ensure preparation for an adult role in a multi-cultural society.

The lowering of artificial barriers within the European Community in 1992 brings a new significance to these arguments. Our initial objective must be to counter low expectations, restricted horizons and prejudice so as to ensure that young people in Devon are as well prepared for their future in Europe as their counterparts on the continental mainland. On leaving school, pupils must also be suitably equipped in terms of culture, language, skills and qualifications to benefit from courses in Further and Higher Education which are recognised throughout the European Community. They must be able to operate successfully and enjoy life fully at a European as well as a local level.

Special Needs

Schools should give particular thought to the curriculum followed by pupils with special educational needs. There is a legal expectation that all pupils should, as their right, have full access to the National and the Devon Curriculum, though the Act recognises that the curriculum will need modifying for a small minority of pupils and that in exceptional circumstances, pupils will be exempt from the National Curriculum.

In mainstream schools, the challenge will be to ensure that pupils for whom the national and Devon curricula are modified can be taught

alongside their fellows. In special schools, particularly those with a secondary age range, the authority recognises that it may be difficult for a small number of teachers to provide the full curriculum. One solution to this problem may be to use the curriculum resources of nearby mainstream schools.

The curriculum will also need to be differentiated to meet the needs of exceptionally able pupils. Such abilities may take a wide variety of forms and the early identification of such gifts is an important responsibility for schools.

Community Education

The authority believes that curriculum planning should take place within the context of an overall philosophy of community education which recognises that education is a life long process and that educational institutions should do everything they can to identify and meet the needs of the communities they serve. This means that parents and families should be encouraged to participate in the learning experiences offered to young people. Equally, these experiences should be rooted, whenever possible, in community environments. In that the curriculum prepares pupils for adult life, it should promote an understanding of the social, economic and political bases of society, and should develop qualities of self-confidence and personal reliance.

Continued Education

It will be clear that the authority believes that it is vital for curriculum continuity to be achieved between the different phases of education. There must, for example, be clear and shared practices about record keeping and every effort should be made to make full use of the potential contribution which Academic Councils can make to this key issue.

Records

Pupil progress is tracked very carefully across the school to ensure that all children are supported or extended and make the expected progress each year. We currently use a computer database called Classroom Monitor to record attainment. Each term the children undertake a piece of writing in a progress book. This is used to record each child's attainment in writing. We also record all test results including SATs, optional SATs, Reading Tests and Cognitive Ability Tests

Matters of Controversy

Because it is important to prepare young people for their role as responsible adult citizens, it has to be recognised that from time to time, matters of political controversy may crop up within the curriculum itself.

Schools must ensure that bias and party politics do not colour the scene. They must also make sure that pupils and students are, in a consistent and thought-out way, made aware that differences of view have a variety of sources – not always political but sometimes economic, social and cultural in the broadest sense. They should, at the least, be helped to recognise the difference between a fact and an opinion and to develop an awareness of personal bias. Controversy is often associated with intellectual liveliness.

The Primary Curriculum

The curriculum offered to young children should be planned so as to provide opportunities for them to explore a variety of structured experiences, using their imagination and powers of thinking to make sense of the world around them. It should, moreover, reflect the freshness of new learning and the pleasure of seeing things for the first time. Preparing for the next stage should not overshadow the uniqueness of any child's immediate experience.

Since young children operate predominantly as individuals, a considerable amount of adult attention is needed to encourage them to collaborate in a positive manner, to take responsibility for their learning, to make choices and decisions for themselves.

The closer the partnership which can be established between home and school, the more effective classroom teaching and learning will be.

As children progress through the succeeding phases of primary education, they must be helped to develop their own links between different areas of activity and learning. Topic and thematic work is important because of the opportunities it offers to establish such links.

At 11, it is reasonable to expect children to have become confident and independent learners who can:-

read a variety of books and other texts with understanding and enjoyment;

communicate clearly and confidently with adults and other children;

write legibly and accurately for a variety of practical, personal and imaginative purposes;

apply mathematical skills and concepts in a variety of everyday settings;

know how to obtain information from a number of sources and record findings in a variety of ways; and using computers for this purpose;

show an understanding of science and technology from first-hand experience;

work with others to investigate, explore, interpret and solve problems;

practise a range of skills and strategies in the creative arts;

be able to talk responsibly about attitudes and values;

show an awareness of historical and geographical perspectives in relation to the present age and the local environment;

show an awareness of religious and cultural traditions;

acquire the skills necessary for computer literacy and also know how to retrieve and present information from various sources.

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