



Plasmarl Primary School

CURRICULUM FOR LEARNING POLICY



A Guide to our “Purposeful, Authentic & Relevant Curriculum”

2023-2024

Welcome to Our School

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is at the heart of our school's planning, policies, practice and ethos. As a rights-respecting school we not only teach about children's rights but also model rights and respect in all relationships. We believe that every member of the school community is a learner which includes pupils, staff and parents. Together we develop as a learning organisation, using information from research, other schools, businesses and the real world to build a culture for improvement. Across all Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs), the application of numeracy, literacy and digital competence is robustly planned for. Teachers are expected to plan and deliver learning objectives pitched appropriately to the learners needs. Lessons have success criteria to ensure the learners are aware of the particular skills they are looking to develop within that lesson. In addition to literacy, numeracy and digital competence, teachers plan for incidental Welsh and opportunities to address relationships and sexuality education in line with the new Curriculum for Wales. There is a whole school approach to well-being enabling pupils to understand their own and others' emotions. This is in line with the Health and Well-Being AoLE, and is integrated throughout the school day, and throughout the curriculum itself.

Children's Rights

Children and young people have 42 rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). These 42 rights give children and young people what they need to grow up happily, healthily and safely. In 2011 Wales became the first country in the UK to make the UNCRC part of its domestic law. The principles of a Children's Rights Approach are:

- Embedding children's rights - at Plasmarl this means that all policies are underpinned by the UNCRC, and all our community know and understand about children's rights.
- Equality and Non-discrimination - at Plasmarl we make sure that every child aspires to be the best they can be.
- Empowering children - At Plasmarl pupils are actively involved in planning their curriculum.
- Participation - At Plasmarl adults and pupils share the decision making and together drive policy and change.
- Accountability - Plasmarl Primary School is held to account for how pupils experience their rights by the governing body and pupil voice groups

Curriculum for Wales

Curriculum for Wales 2022 organises learning around six areas of learning and experience. Each of the areas of learning and experience has been designed to support learners to realise the four purposes of the curriculum. They are intended to promote collaboration and cross-disciplinary school-level curriculum development and design. All teachers plan for the cross-curricular responsibilities of literacy, numeracy and digital competence to support almost all learning. These are essential for learners to be able to participate successfully and confidently in the modern world.

Equal Opportunities

At Plasmarl Primary School, we are committed to ensuring equity of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of disability, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity, marriage and civil partnership. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity, are able to participate fully in school life, and feel empowered.

Positive Relationships

Plasmarl Primary School has a very positive behaviour culture. We are very proud of the behaviour of our learners who are frequently praised by visitors and when visiting other places for their good manners and general behaviour. Good behaviour is a necessary condition for effective teaching and learning to take place. The most meaningful and positive form of discipline is self-discipline. We work hard at Plasmarl School to instil this in our learners. The response to misbehaviour is always positive and will depend on the nature of the misdemeanour, and the age and maturity of the pupil. All pupils will be listened to and made aware of the effect that their actions have on others.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Plasmarl is a 'Trauma Informed and Mentally Healthy School'. The wellbeing of everyone in our school is our highest priority. We implement many interventions to ensure the relational and emotional health of all. Two of our staff members hold diplomas in 'Trauma and Mental Health Informed Schools and Communities'

In Plasmarl, we teach and develop mental health through-

- Explicit teaching of self-regulation
- A 'Trauma Informed and Mentally Healthy Schools' model
- Self-regulation areas and resources
- Effective links with outside agencies
- Daily Check-ins
- Daily sensory circuits

We encourage our learners to develop self-regulation, and to understand the "how and why" of their emotions in order for them to develop strategies to best help and support them. Each Term the pupils learn about their amygdala and how this effects how we behave when we are angry, stressed or anxious. Children will regularly self-assess themselves to identify where they are in terms of their feelings, and what they can do to help move them into a more mentally healthy zone.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

At Plasmarl Primary School, we recognise that all pupils come to school at different stages of development and with different needs. Whilst many factors contribute to the range of difficulties experienced by some children, we believe that much can be done to overcome them by parents, teachers and pupils working together. Pupils who meet our criteria for having ALN will be supported by class teachers, teaching assistants other adults and their learning environment.

The ALN aims of the school:

- To meet the needs of all pupils through excellent teaching strategies, classroom organisation and differentiation.

- To have a whole school Universal Provision that addresses the needs of all pupils.
- To ensure that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- To ensure that early identification of a pupil's needs is made
- To ensure that ALN pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
- To use a Person Centred Practice where the pupil, parents, school staff and outside support agencies are involved from the beginning in planning actions and ways forward to support pupils with ALN. Every pupil in the school creates their own one page profile that informs adults how best to support them.
- To ensure that parents are kept regularly informed of their child's progress
- To ensure that ALN pupils are involved, where practical, in decisions affecting their future ALN provision
- To work in partnership with parents, pupils and other agencies e.g. Educational Psychologist, Speech Therapists, Social Workers, School Nurse etc.

Cynefin

Our school has 145 years of history, all of which is underpinned by an outstanding community ethos. This is "Cynefin". Cynefin is a Welsh word that cannot be directly translated into English, but means a place of multiple belongings.

We all have the responsibility to ensure that we build aspirations, ambition, and positivity in our learners. It is vital that our learners' experiences are grounded in an understanding of their identities and their world to form their cynefin.

This will not only allow them to develop a strong sense of their own identity and well-being, but to develop an understanding of the diversity of others' and make connections with people, places and histories elsewhere in Wales and across the world. We are fortunate to have an excellent community of pupils, parents, staff, governors and beyond.

We work together, striving to give our children cynefin, so that they feel that they really do belong.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is mandatory and is considered as part of the Health and Well-Being Area of learning, as well as being a cross cutting theme across all learning.

Relationships and Sexuality Education is introduced to the pupils through:

- Circle time activities
- 'Growing Up' resources
- ABM Personal Development and Healthy relationships lessons
- Story books
- Curriculum subjects, e.g. Science, RE · Personal and Social Education programmes
- Informally as opportunities arise in the classroom.

Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE)

In Plasmarl, we teach RVE through-

- Explicit teaching of world beliefs
- Exploring ideas through "Big Questions"
- Encouraging all pupils to see links with real world events
- Reflection on our world and how we can make a difference

- Opportunities to study local and global contexts referring to the Sustainable Development Goals • Age appropriate daily worship time and reflection
- Stories, school events and visitors

Purposeful, Authentic & Relevant Curriculum

The principles underpinning every Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) in Plasmarl

Primary ensures that the curriculum is-

- authentic: rooted in Welsh values and culture and aligned with an agreed set of stated purposes
- evidence-based: drawing on the best of existing practice within Wales and from elsewhere, and on sound research
- responsive: relevant to the needs of today (individual, local and national) but also equipping all young people with the knowledge, skills and dispositions for future challenges as lifelong learners
- inclusive: easily understood by all, encompassing an entitlement to high-quality education for every child and young person and taking account of their views in the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and those of parents, carers and wider society
- ambitious: embodying high expectations and setting no artificial limits on achievement and challenge for each individual child and young person
- empowering: developing competences which will allow young people to engage confidently with the challenges of their future lives
- unified: enabling continuity and flow with components which combine and build progressively
- engaging: encouraging enjoyment from learning and satisfaction in mastering challenging subject matter
- based on subsidiarity: commanding the confidence of all, while encouraging appropriate ownership and decision making by those closest to the teaching and learning process
- manageable: recognising the implications for and supported by appropriate assessment and accountability arrangements.
- rights-based: underpinned by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Four Purposes

Our curriculum is everything a learner experiences in pursuit of the four purposes. It is not simply what we teach, but how we teach and crucially, why we teach it. It is the whole school experience offered, not merely restricted to lessons and activities within the school day. Our curriculum includes the attitudes and values we promote, the opportunities we provide beyond the school day, and the relationships we have with our families and the community. This is achieved through ensuring the four purposes are at the heart of what we plan and do.

12 Pedagogical Principles

Our teachers teach through a range of approaches, not restricted to, but including those outlined in the 12 Pedagogical Principles.

Our curriculum will:

- create authentic contexts for learning
- encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning
- support social development & positive relationships
- encourage collaboration
- sustain pupil effort to reach high but achievable targets
- employ a broad repertoire of teaching approaches
- promote problem solving, creative & Critical thinking
- build on previous knowledge & experience to engage interest
- focus on the Four purposes
- use assessment for learning to accelerate progress
- make connections within & across AoLEs (areas of learning and experiences)
- reinforce Cross Curricular responsibilities – Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence.

Planning and Preparing for Learning

Our curriculum places emphasis on equipping young people for life. It provides pupils with opportunities to learn, refine and apply new knowledge and skills in different situations. Every opportunity is used to develop the whole learner within real life contexts.

Learners get a deep understanding of how to thrive in an increasingly digital world. We follow a digital competence framework developing digital skills across the curriculum, whilst preparing them for the opportunities and risks that an online world presents.

All teachers ensure that learners are ambitiously planned for, within a progression step relevant to their need.

Each AoLE has a number of what matters statements, which ensure breadth, and coverage of the fundamental key concepts.

The Curriculum for Wales set out clear descriptions for learning within each area of learning and experience. Teachers skilfully plan from these to ensure every pupil receives the support they need to make maximum progress.

Teachers use the PPA time effectively to plan, prepare and assess learning within their phases. This takes the form of the skills, knowledge and experiences that each child needs to be able to progress.

Whole School Topics

We believe that to get the best out of all our learners (and that includes staff) we have to offer rich and exciting experiences. We are committed to developing a curriculum that engages, enthuses and inspires our pupils and staff. We encourage teachers to have the freedom to teach in ways they feel will have the best outcomes for their learners. We have a strong emphasis on the acquisition and application of skills and knowledge through experiential and active learning. All children contribute to their curriculum, ensuring that they have opportunities to influence their learning. Wherever possible we consider Cynefin, a Welsh word that means a place of multiple belongings, and promotes the use of the community that surrounds the learners.

Approaches to Teaching and Learning

In Plasmarl, staff deploy the following approaches to their teaching and learning preparation.

Bubbles – activities that are completed in an adult led group.

Missions – activities that are completed independently / predominantly without the support of an adult.

The series of missions and bubbles should take place in a mission 'cycle'. Each mission cycle could last a week, fortnight or even longer, depending on the nature of the missions and bubbles.

The missions in each 'cycle' should include ideas suggested by the teacher, but most importantly, **must** have a high proportion of activities that are suggested / chosen by the pupils. These should typically be the ideas from the class working wall.

The working wall should be an area that is open to the pupils to keep adding to. It is important that pupils (and the working wall) are key aspects in the planning process of each cycle.

It is important that across the term, there is variation in the activities undertaken – ensuring that there are opportunities for the pupils to develop their Literacy, Numeracy, Investigative, Creative and Digital Competency skills.

Despite this, the main aim of missions should be to develop independence and creativity. The activities chosen should be at a level that allows the pupils to work independently, which in turn will allow staff to concentrate predominantly on the pupils within their Bubbles.

Chilli Challenges (Learner Directed) enables learners to have a range of opportunities to follow their needs and interests. This is often where pupils independently apply their knowledge.

Our pupils participate in carousel learning, particularly for SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar) activities.

Phonic work is taught through the use 'Read Write Inc' in Reception to Year 2. Reading and comprehension skills of our older pupils are developed through the use of the reading behaviours.

Assessment

We use a range of assessment effectively to plan next steps for learners. It is fully inclusive, and considers the progress of all learners in both a formative and summative assessment context. We believe that effective assessment provides information to improve teaching and learning.

We give our children regular and consistent feedback on their learning so that they understand what it is that they need to do better. This allows us to base our planning on a detailed knowledge of each pupil. We give parents a written report on their child's progress so that teachers, pupils and parents are all working together to raise standards for all our learners.

The aims and objectives of assessment in our school are:

- To enable our learners to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in their work;
- To help our learners understand what they need to do next to improve their work;
- To allow teachers to plan work that accurately reflects the needs of each pupil;

- To provide regular information for parents that enable them to support their child's learning;
- To provide the head teacher and governors with information that allows them to make judgements about the effectiveness of the school.

Assessment, Teaching and Learning

Assessment is an ongoing process which is indistinguishable from learning and teaching. We use a wide range of assessment approaches, building a holistic picture of the learner's development. We believe this enables us to support the progression of each learner in our care. Whilst Assessment, Teaching & Learning is a complex system but is one process, and must not be separated.

When Planning and Assessing Progress teachers are expected to use the Principles of Progression:-

- Increasing effectiveness
- Increasing breadth and depth of knowledge
- Deepening understanding of the ideas and disciplines within the areas
- Refinement and growing sophistication in the use and application of skills
- Making connections and transferring learning into new contexts

Feedback to Learners

In Plasmarl, we believe that all children should be challenged in order to reach their potential. Feedback to pupils is clear, and staff ensure that pupils understand their next steps, and/or what they need to do to improve their work.

We mark children's work and offer feedback in order:

- For pupils to improve and get better
- For staff and pupils to share expectations;
- To show that we value pupil progress, and encourage them to do the same;
- To boost learner self-esteem;
- To give clear picture of how far learners have progressed;
- To provide learners with next steps;
- to offer specific information on the extent to which the lesson objective, and/or the individual targets have been met;
- To promote self and/or peer assessment, whereby they recognise how they can improve;
- To identify any misconceptions;
- To provide the adults with opportunities to adapt learning to suit the pupils' needs

Our Learning Environment

The physical and emotional learning environment at Plasmarl Primary reinforces our commitment to high standards and the drive to continually raise achievement. The learning environment is a means of adding greater depth and breadth to pupils' learning as well as playing an important role in supporting the well-being of our learners. It raises self-esteem, celebrates what we do and encourages pride in the classroom and school.

The school's aims for the **learning environment** are:

- To motivate children by setting high standards to which they can aspire

- To support independence, interdependence and active learning
- To encourage collaboration
- To celebrate achievement
- To create a stimulating teaching and learning environment
- To encourage aesthetic awareness and a positive attitude to their own environments
- To arouse curiosity, pose questions and stimulate enquiry
- To increase children's self-esteem and pride in their work
- To reflect and value different levels of achievement and cultural backgrounds
- To inform and inspire parents, carers, governors, teachers and visitors to the school.

When we talk about a calm learning environment we mean children:

- Are on task
- Are aware of acceptable noise levels for classwork and teachers help to maintain this by example
- Are taught to tidy up after themselves
- Know the rules and boundaries
- Can access resources they require
- Have appropriate amount of room for the activity

The learning environment is well organised when:

- Walls, zones and resource areas are labelled so that pupils can be independent and know where to find what they need
- Children's resources are accessible
- There is a clear furniture layout
- Areas are kept tidy

Expectations for Learning –the Teacher

The teachers will:

- keep a consistent focus on the four purposes of the curriculum
- challenge all learners
- encourage sustained effort and growth mindset
- use a blend of pedagogical approaches to promote problem solving, creative and critical thinking
- build upon previous knowledge
- create authentic contexts for learning
- employ assessment for learning principles
- teach across all areas of learning and experiences
- reinforce cross-curricular responsibilities including literacy (Welsh and English), numeracy and digital competency
- provide opportunities for pupils to practice their skills in real life situations
- encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning
- support social and emotional development
- encourage independence and interdependence
- value the integral skills within their planning

Expectations for Learners

The pupils will:

- build from what they know

- ask questions about their learning
- value their own and others' ideas
- learn from their mistakes
- make choices about their learning including when to use ICT
- have time to reflect on own and others' work
- challenge themselves
- use a range of approaches to learning
- enjoy working together and on their own