

Spire Junior School Curriculum Policy Document



Purpose:

At Spire Juniors we believe that children should be supported, nurtured and encouraged to become global citizens, having the purpose, skills and dreams to make a better future. We believe that by creating an exciting and stimulating learning environment we can prepare our children to be safe, ready and respectful members of society with the best start in life.

Structure and Organisation:

Our curriculum is organised into three areas, 'Discover', 'Explore' and 'Create'. Central to the curriculum are Core Skills that underpin everything we do:

Active Learning:

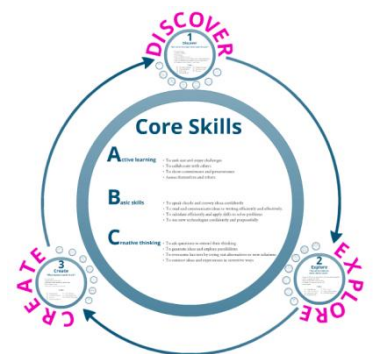
- To seek out and enjoy challenges
- To collaborate with others
- To show commitment and perseverance
- Assess themselves and others

Basic Skills:

- To speak clearly and convey ideas confidently
- To read and communicate ideas in writing efficiently and effectively.
- To calculate efficiently and apply skills to solve problems
- To use new technologies confidently and purposefully

Creative Thinking:

- To ask questions to extend their thinking
- To generate ideas and explore possibilities
- To overcome barriers by trying out alternatives or new solutions
- To connect ideas and experiences in inventive ways



Working across three terms allows us to explore areas of the curriculum in greater depth. In the autumn term, the main theme is History; in the spring term, its Geography, and in the summer term, we focus on the Arts. Further skills are mapped to each term and are developed as a result of the curriculum we plan:

Discover: History

- Plan and research
- Analyse and evaluate
- Show empathy
- Show a commitment to justice

- Explore issues, events and problems from different perspectives
- Support conclusions using reasoned arguments and evidence
- Communicate their learning in relevant ways

Explore: Geography

- Recognise that they can impact their environment and community
- Show a commitment to justice
- Recognise their roles as Global citizens
- Communicate learning in relevant ways
- Show empathy

Create: Arts

- Show flexibility
- Organise time and resources
- Communicate their learning in relevant ways
- Work towards a goal
- Adapt ideas as circumstances change

Curriculum planning: A pedagogy of possibility

'We're here to put a dent in the universe.'

Steve Jobs

We believe that our children deserve inspirational learning opportunities. Curriculum planning ensures that children are immersed in exciting projects with authentic outcomes. They are challenged to work creatively whilst deepening their knowledge and understanding through highly engaging and enriching experiences.


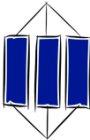
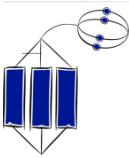
- Using a 'long term' concept-based learning model, we begin by identifying the curriculum content to be covered. We then identify key concepts that can be drawn out to allow different areas of the curriculum to be threaded together using a long term overview. The concepts are then framed with an enquiry question that provides a starting point for the projects. Throughout, children are encouraged to think deeply about their work, expand their horizons and take responsibility for their learning.
- In order to expand our children's often limited horizons all our projects are contextualised, culturally relevant and purposeful. Children work towards authentic outcomes and engage with critical audiences, e.g. journalists and shop window dressing. Projects frequently involve the children dealing with complex issues, and, as a result, they develop an understanding of what is possible and a belief that they can make a difference.

- We have exceptionally high expectations of learning and outcomes. Our curriculum is designed to allow children to work on real world projects. Each project engages with external critique and 'real world feedback' to provide a reason for children to redrafting and adapting their learning. Ultimately we want our children to be instilled with the desire to produce unique work.
- Projects use a combination of direct teaching, facilitated learning and guided discovery within the classroom and the wider environment. A plethora of opportunities exists to allow our children work alongside experts and professionals, take part in visits and residential trips, contribute to inter-school events, sleep at 'The Deep', sing with 'Young Voices', run with the Brownlee brothers and travel into space! Our classroom environments are designed to encourage children to work collaboratively, flexibly and with high levels of independence.

Assessment:

The three curriculum themes of history, geography, and arts have rigorous skills progression grids which ensure that key subject-specific learning is embedded throughout each project. This is assessed using SOLO taxonomy, which consists of 5 levels of development. The school focuses on Level 3, 4 and 5; Multi-structural, Relational, Extended Abstract.

Children are continually assessed, formative judgments are made mid-term to allow teachers to adapt learning opportunities and then again at the end of the term.

Developing		Level 3 Multi-structural: Several relevant individual aspects of learning are evident
Secure		Level 4 Relational: Different aspects of learning are linked and integrated, contributing to a deeper and more coherent understanding of the whole.
Enriched		Level 5 Extended Abstract: Relational learning is re-thought at a conceptual level, looked at in a new way, and used as the basis for prediction, generalisation, reflection, or the creation of new understanding.

Curriculum Development:

The curriculum structure allows continued innovation and development. Teachers have the freedom and confidence to change, adapt and develop the content of individual projects which are underpinned by our non-negotiables skills and 'procedural' knowledge, namely:

Non-negotiables skills and 'procedural' knowledge		
History	Geography	Arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan and research• Analyse and evaluate• Show empathy• Show a commitment to justice• Explore issues, events and problems from different perspectives• Support conclusions using reasoned arguments and evidence• Communicate their learning in relevant ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise that they can impact their environment and community• Show a commitment to justice• Recognise their roles as Global citizens• Communicate learning in relevant ways• Show empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show flexibility• Organise time and resources• Communicate their learning in relevant ways• Work towards a goal• Adapt ideas as circumstances change

Continuous research and links with innovative schools are used to inform practice and high levels of reflectiveness throughout school lead to a shared commitment to continued development.

