



# OUR CURRICULUM AT WILLOWBROOK SCHOOL



# Vision statement:

*“To provide a transformative educational experience that is based on deep knowledge, nurturing relationships and personal responsibility.”*

# Curriculum – what is it and why is it important?

- The curriculum is at the **heart** of what young people experience at school. It is fundamental to providing children with the very best start to their education.
- The curriculum can be described as **what** we choose to teach children, and in **what order**.
- It is our aim that children leave Willowbrook School with a **deep understanding** of themselves and the world around them.
- **The National Curriculum** includes the 'ingredients' we must include in our curriculum. Our curriculum does this, but within this framework, we are able to make lots of decisions about how best to deliver this statutory content.
- Our curriculum has been carefully and comprehensively designed to ensure that it is **balanced, challenging** and based on our understanding of **how children learn**.

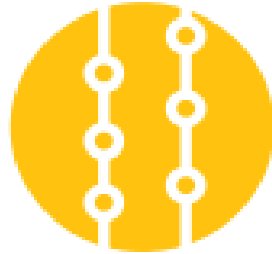
# Four principles that underpin our curriculum-design:



## Balanced

All subjects should get their 'fair share': children are entitled to experience a full, broad and balanced curriculum.

We value the individual subject disciplines of every subject.



## Organised well

Knowledge should be well-sequenced over time so that there is clear progression in understanding and children are able to commit their learning to long-term memory.



## Powerful links

Vertical progression in each subject is always the starting point for curriculum design. Horizontal links between subjects are only made when they are powerful; enhancing pupils' understanding in the linked subjects.



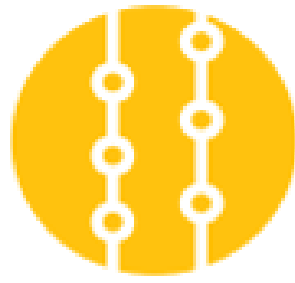
## Rigorous

Our curriculum is knowledge-rich and challenging. We believe that this is an entitlement of every pupil and reflects the high expectations we hold at Willowbrook School.



## Balanced

Our curriculum is designed to ensure children get a 'fair share' of all subjects across the year. Our 'Curriculum Design' document clearly outlines every unit children will study during their time at Willowbrook School. It covers all National Curriculum requirements and we go as far as outlining the range of trips, experiences and other entitlements children will encounter while at our school.



## Organised well

When knowledge content is sequenced well, children are more likely to make links between prior and current learning. The curriculum 'journey' for each subject is thought-out very carefully, supporting children to develop comprehensive and nuanced mental schemas for each subject. Within each subject, certain 'strands' run throughout this journey in a well-sequenced way.



## Powerful links

We know that when links are made **meaningfully**, this can help children to develop a more complex understanding of a given theme. Therefore, within our curriculum there are many cross-curricular links, but these are never 'forced'. We always prioritise the vertical progression of each subject, and then make horizontal links between subjects when it makes sense to. For example, children may study a high-quality story set in a historical context in the same year that they study that same historical topic within their history lessons.



## Rigorous

We have thought very carefully about the knowledge children will acquire during their time at Willowbrook, and this declarative knowledge is written as 'Know that' statements within the 'Unit Overviews' that teachers follow. We have a Unit Overview for every unit, in every subject, in every year group! This means we provide a consistent and accurate diet of subject content every year.

As well as capturing the declarative knowledge children must be taught, the Unit Overviews also describe the procedural knowledge (skills/subject disciplines) that the children will also develop their understanding of during their time with us.



# The importance of subject leadership

- The Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher initially designed the majority of the curriculum and now oversee its effective implementation.
- Teachers were well-matched to leading subjects in which they have a particular interest or areas of expertise.
- The DHT and AHT are forensic in identifying areas of strength and areas for development within our subject leadership. Teachers are supported to develop their expertise and are given a clear oversight about the curriculum design in their subject area (if they were not directly involved in its original design).
- All subject leads have an opportunity to run training or to lead support for colleagues throughout an academic year.
- A programme is planned for enabling subject leads to carry out pupil conferencing based on their subject area. We believe that talking to children gives us the best insight into what is being taught and what children are remembering.

# Effective implementation and evaluating impact

- The curriculum implementation began in September 2019. From the very start, we have made time to evaluate its impact. This involves:
  1. SPMs (Standards and Progress Meetings) where we meet in teams to look at how children have applied their learning in their work.
  2. Talking to children (DHT/AHT, as well as subject leads) about their work.
  3. Finally, it also involves reflective meetings where teachers report back on what has/hasn't worked within specific units. This might mean, for example, some adjustments to the amount of content we're trying to cover.
- The curriculum implementation was disrupted by the 2020 lockdown, however, we were able to fully resume it in September 2020. During the 2021 lockdown, due to vast improvements in our Remote Education offer, we were able to continue to deliver our planned curriculum with only very minor adjustments.
- Upon children's return to school in March 2021, a heavy focus was put on retrieval and recap, to ensure any gaps in learning were addressed before proceeding in full with the planned units of study.

# Reception children developing balances in P.E



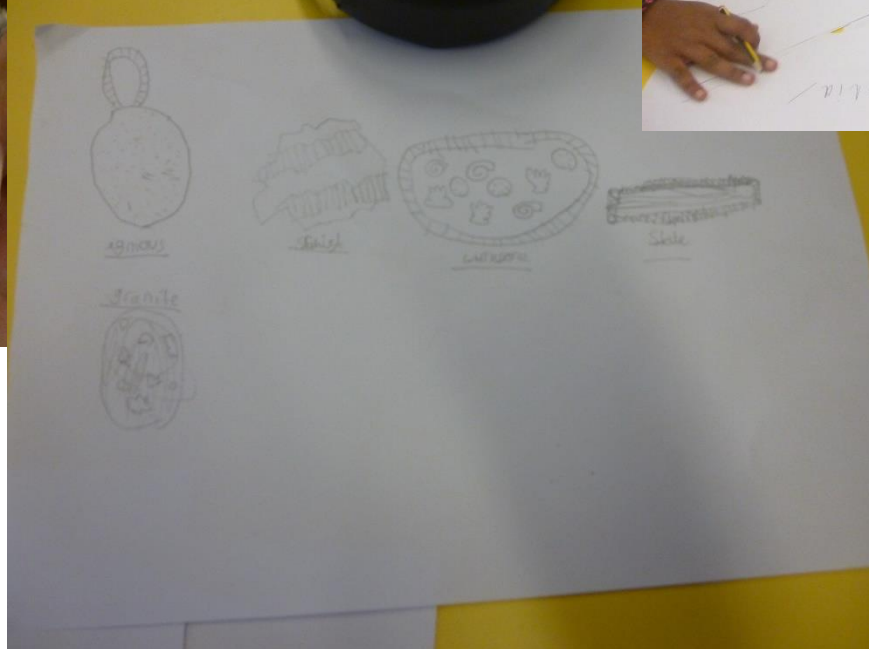
# Sketching fossils in Art as part of their Mary Anning unit – Year 1



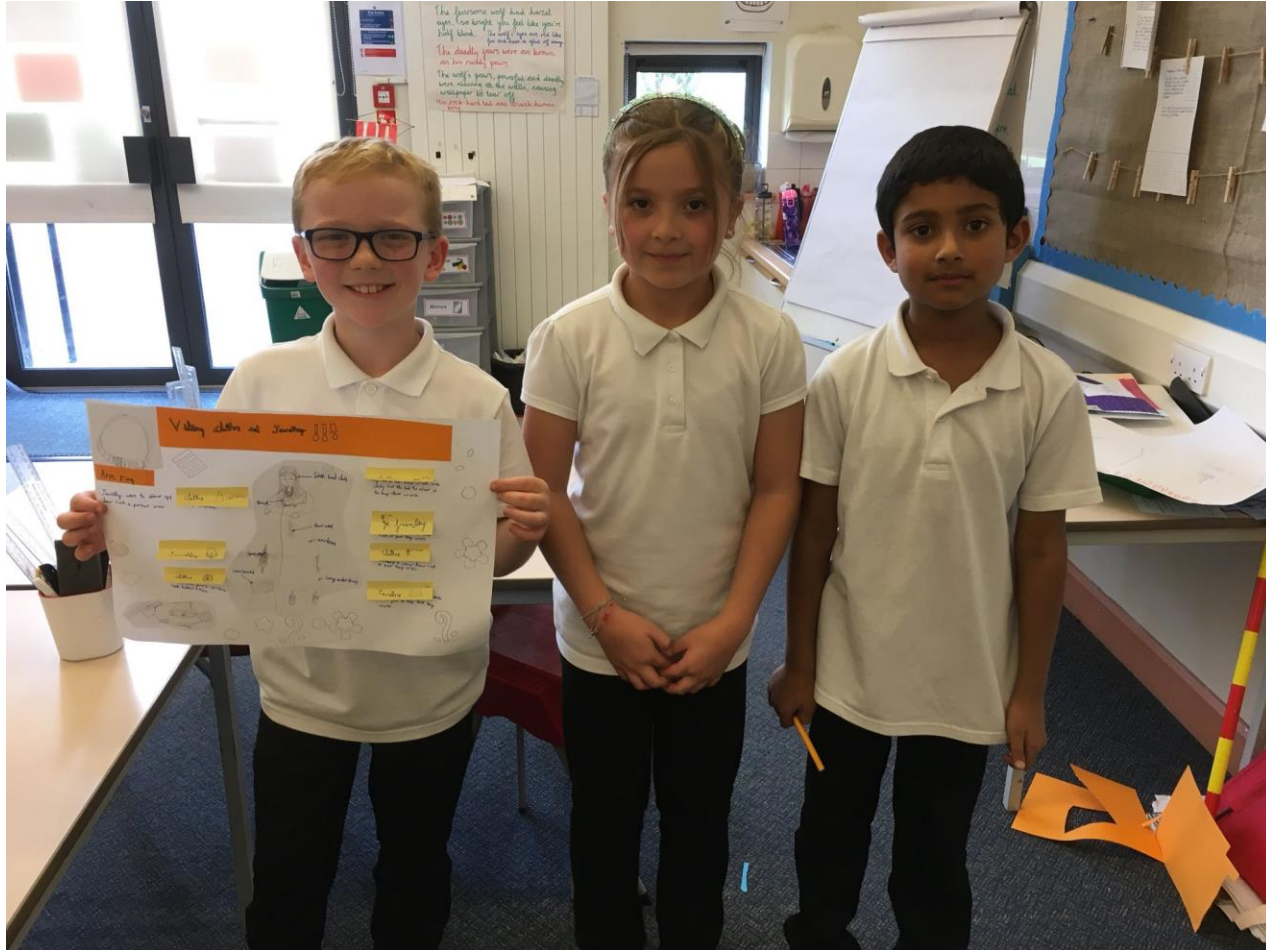
# Great Fire of London collages – Year 2



# Learning about types of rocks in Science - Year 3



# Viking fact-finding (History) and longboat-making (DT) in Year 4



# Singing 'Livin' on a Prayer' as part of their Music unit – Year 5





# Artwork and Writing inspired by World War 2 – Year 6

