

# DEEP DIVE:

Curriculum area:  
Land-based studies



**Belle Vue  
School**

**Cornfields  
School**

*'Improving life chances'*



# INTRODUCTION

In September 2019, Ofsted introduced changes to the inspection framework. They continued to report on all aspects of a school, as set out in section five of the Education Act 2005, but changed the judgement headings and introduced a 'quality of education' judgement.

The revised inspection methodology, which supports the education inspection framework, has combined aspects of the previous key judgements of 'teaching, learning and assessment' and 'outcomes' to provide a more holistic view of standards, particularly focusing on the curriculum.

The new methodology also saw the introductions of 'deep dives', which involves gathering evidence on the curriculum intent, implementation and impact. The Ofsted deep dive is one of the key elements of the new Ofsted inspection framework's curriculum focus.

In any school, the primary focus must be the education pupils are receiving day to day in the classroom. In order to establish if what pupils are receiving in the class is a quality education, we must be clear on the purpose of what we are delivering.

We have therefore utilised the Ofsted 'deep dive' framework as a system to ensure we are focussed on the quality of education and are able to accurately direct resources to achieve an outstanding curriculum. Our staff have looked at the subjects we offer and our cohort of pupils. Our staff have reflected and asked the questions.

1. What is the intention of this programme of study? (Intent)

Only when we can answer this question do we move on to the next question.

2. How should we best deliver this programme of study? (Implementation)

Only when we can answer this question do we move on to the next question.

3. How will we know we have been successful? (Impact)

At the core of our deep-dive approach is to consider and evaluate how education flows from intention to implementation to impact within our school. Without doing this, it would be impossible to form a valid judgement on the quality of the education we provide. Moreover, in completing the deep dives, we are able to ask ourselves pertinent questions and are able to accurately identify areas for improvement, from which we are able to quickly respond to provide necessary improvements in the quality of the education we deliver.

In summary, the deep-dive approach adopted by Ofsted has been developed to allow for accurate assessments of the quality of education to be made. It has been seen that this assessment process is a highly effective tool and we have embraced this tool as a regular feature of our self-assessment process in considering the quality of education we offer.

# CURRICULUM AREA: LAND BASED STUDIES

## Intent

At Cornfields and Belle Vue, we encourage our young people to take in – and show interest in – the environment and nature around them. Throughout the Land-Based Studies course, pupils will learn about the basic structure of plants and their needs for healthy growth. Pupils will learn about soil structure and nutrients available for plant growth. They will learn about factors that prevent healthy growth such as lack of nutrients, plus the presence of weeds and how to rectify these issues.

We will explore the effects of human presence on land and how our food gets from land to plate. Pupils will gain an understanding in where their food comes from and how it came to be there. They will gain understanding in wildlife conservation in a range of environments such as grassland, forest and aquatic. Using their knowledge, our pupils will maintain and positively contribute to the environment around them. They will then gain knowledge in how to use their surroundings to their advantage, including bushcraft skills and back-woods cooking.

By experiencing all of this, we intend for pupils to appreciate their surroundings and understand the importance of conservation. We aim to instil curiosity within them and encourage them to ask questions and seek answers about the natural world.

We will achieve this by growing and consuming a range of plants, plus local visits. The pupils will be encouraged to record their experiences and to use scientific language. This will be built on over the year to ensure progression and resilience. The practical and theoretical lessons will enhance their study skills and help to broaden and to secure their knowledge.

## Implementation

Pupils will develop the skills to sow seeds and to produce cuttings in order to improve their practical skills. Through revisiting existing skills, lesson plans and resources we will help them to build on prior knowledge as well as introducing new skills and challenges. Pupils will have a range of opportunities to experience biosciences through engaging in practical tasks beyond the classroom. Key words will be highlighted in each lesson pack, to help pupils to increase their general scientific vocabulary and understanding. Pupils will experience preparing soil for planting, cultivating and maintaining plants – and creating habitats for wildlife.

In order for pupils' knowledge to develop, there will be a structure to the lesson sequence whereby prior learning will always be considered and where there are opportunities for revision. Through these lessons, we intend to inspire pupils to develop an appreciation of the importance of cultivation and how it has shaped our present world. Pupils will experience practical lessons on firefighting and bushcraft skills, using the natural resources on offer. They will use these skills to complete tasks such as building shelters, fires, whittling and cooking basic meals.

# Impact

Pupils will be encouraged to use bioscience vocabulary accurately and to understand the different strands of botany, zoology and soil science with a thorough understanding of the key physical and human processes. Pupils will begin to make relevant links from biosciences and horticulture to other curriculum subjects, such as domestic science and health. This will improve their ability to enquire intelligently about the world around them and to assess their own impact on it. All pupils will realise that they have choices to make and the importance of developing a positive commitment to their environment and the future of the planet. When they complete the course, they will be able to speak confidently about biosciences and nutrition, they will have skills and understanding in fire and bushcraft safety – and the ability to use these skills to cook with natural the resources surrounding them.

Land-Based Studies will utilise a full range of resources, including display materials, that will be seen across the school, natural resources in the surrounding area and site visits. The learning environment will be enhanced by accurate technical vocabulary displayed, spoken and used by learners. We will ensure that the importance of Land-Based Sciences is appreciated by all pupils across the school, therefore encouraging them to continue building on their knowledge throughout life. Its impact will also become apparent through the pupils' key questioning skills, which will be developed during each lesson.

All pupils will be more informed about their place in the food cycle and better understand how the decisions that they make will impact on their future. All pupils in school will be able to talk confidently about their own wellbeing and their place in the natural world. This evidence will be seen through the correct use of vocabulary, with well-balanced explanations and reasoned opinions in all curriculum areas.

Pupils will acquire a range of accredited AQA Unit Awards, which will build a portfolio of evidence for work in later life.

## IN SUMMARY

The core purpose of our schools is to 'improve the life chances of children'. In short – we aim to reverse and eradicate the known correlation between poor outcomes in life – and factors that have made pupils vulnerable to underachievement at school. We achieve this by going above and beyond, setting high expectations and improving outcomes by working together with others.

We have a clear and compelling vision about the knowledge and skills that pupils need in order to take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. Our school ethos and curriculum are firmly embedded with a belief that we can powerfully address social disadvantage.

We are clear about the end points the curriculum is building towards – and what pupils need to know and be able to do to reach those end points. Our school curriculum is planned and sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught previously.

Ofsted has outlined that schools who take a radical approach to the curriculum – with effective sequencing, structure and implementation – will be assessed favourably. We welcome this autonomy and believe that the curriculum needs to be radically reviewed, as doing more of the same will result in the status quo of underperformance of disadvantaged groups being the norm.

A well-constructed, well-taught curriculum will lead to pupils learning more and – and therefore achieving positive results. We aim to ensure that all of our pupils acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.