

DEEP DIVE:

Curriculum area: Life skills



**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: LIFE SKILLS

Intent

The Life Skills sequence of work aims to equip children with basic day-to-day skills that will help them to become more independent outside of the school environment. It intends to develop a pupil's interest and knowledge to support them in dealing with the long-term demands and challenges of everyday life effectively.

Through carefully planned and resourced lessons that develop knowledge, skills and attributes, pupils will acquire an understanding of independent living, money management, employability, personal care and well-being.

Many pupils who attend the school have specific needs and are vulnerable, perhaps with more complex independent living needs. The Life Skills sequence of work provides social and vocational skills - improving expression, communication, confidence and self-esteem - and facilitates positive changes in behaviour and well-being.

Implementation

The sequence of work is intended to be taught in topics to enable pupils to build on previous learning, to explore topics appropriate to their developmental age and to appeal to their personalised interests.

The units are designed to be delivered in a practical way, using many approaches such as group working, paired exercises and solo work. Throughout the year, pupils will have opportunities to explore real-life activities such as laundry skills, work experience and managing a personal savings account. The activities should help pupils to build confidence and resilience. Activities will be qualified with appropriate use of AQA Unit Awards that can reinforce the value of such learning.

Impact

The development of Life Skills helps our pupils to find new ways of thinking and practical problem-solving. The sequence of work at Cornfields and Belle Vue will allow them to recognise the impact of their actions (and teach them to take responsibility for what they do - rather than blaming others), build confidence to make decisions and understand why they make certain choices outside of the classroom. Life Skills will support pupils in developing a greater sense of self-awareness and appreciation for others.

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.