



Curriculum Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Grace Primary places the highest priority on quality teaching and learning in the classroom.
- 1.2. This policy aims to provide an overview of the key principles underlying the Curriculum at Grace Primary; the structure of the Curriculum; Distinctive Teaching Methodologies and how Curriculum Planning and Evaluation takes place.

2. Key Principles

Our curriculum aims to:

- 2.1. Provide a broad and balanced education for all pupils, which stimulates their intellectual curiosity and enriches their minds;
- 2.2. Promote a positive attitude to learning and good study habits so that children are motivated to continue learning beyond the classroom;
- 2.3. Enable pupils to understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to apply these in relevant situations;
- 2.4. Support pupils' moral, social, cultural and spiritual development;
- 2.5. Encourage pupils to be active physically and to take responsibility for their own health;
- 2.6. Prepare pupils for progression required to High Schools and external examinations;
- 2.7. Ensure equal access to learning for all pupils, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support;
- 2.8. Make pupils aware of both local and global issues and show them how they can contribute to society

3. Framework

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other school policies and training materials, including:

- Teachers' Handbook
- Marking Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Homework Policy
- Curriculum Planning Document

4. Roles and responsibilities

- 4.1. The Principal and Senior Leadership Team (including the Philosophy Director; Senior Teacher and subject specialists) are responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to and that:
 - 4.1.1. In each subject the curriculum content reflects the aims of the school;
 - 4.1.2. Curriculum Planning sheets are reviewed regularly to ensure logical and consistent progression in each subject;
 - 4.1.3. The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate;
 - 4.1.4. Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs;
 - 4.1.5. Professional support and training at the whole school, department and individual levels is given to teaching staff to enable them to deliver the curriculum effectively.

- 4.2. All teachers have a responsibility to deliver lessons of the highest quality to ensure that all pupils are engaged in learning and challenged appropriately. They must also develop effective strategies to assess learning to ensure that pupil outcomes are consistent with the learning objectives.

5. Curriculum structure

5.1. Foundation Phase (Grade 1-3)

- 5.1.1. During this phase, concentration is placed on the development of core skills (reading, writing, spelling, maths) recognising that these are fundamental to success in future learning.
- 5.1.2. We check progress through assessments conducted in the class environment during the year in English and Maths (see Assessment Policy). In addition to the teachers' oversight of reading, we also use the Holborn Reading Scale in Grades 1 and 2 to check progress in reading once per year to ensure that support and intervention measures can be put in place where required.
- 5.1.3. Outside of the core skills, the curriculum for all children comprises Science, History, Geography, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Picture Study, Composer Study, Music, Art and PE.
- 5.1.4. Lessons are kept short and focused in order to maintain higher levels of motivation and concentration. Disciplinary and Inspirational Subjects are alternated during the day in order to help the children keep a maximum focus.
- 5.1.5. Homework is kept to a minimum so that children have time outside of school to pursue other interests. However, some homework is helpful to teach self-management lessons and to develop a home-school partnership. See Homework Policy for suggested items and timing of homework activities.

- 5.1.6. Children benefit from a range of optional extra-curricular activities such as Educational Games; Hobbies and Crafts and Drama.
- 5.1.7. Children have the option of learning particular musical instruments and to take part in the School Choir.
- 5.1.8. Special events such as plays, poetry recitals and a sports day are organized during the year and selected days are chosen for celebrations, e.g. World Book Day, Heritage Day etc.
- 5.1.9. Children are taken on two school excursions per term which broadens their learning in particular subject areas.

5.2. Intermediate Phase (Grade 4-7)

- 5.2.1. The Intermediate Phase continues the same subjects started in the Foundation Phase, namely English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Picture Study, Composer Study, Music, Art and PE. However, in Grades 6 & 7 slightly longer sessions are allocated to the teaching of English and Maths at the beginning of the day.
- 5.2.2. In Grades 6 & 7, the children are prepared to understand the demands of mid-year and end-of-year exams and to develop good exam technique. However, we keep the focus upon intrinsic reasons for studying each subject.
- 5.2.3. Homework in these years increases slightly more in duration especially in Grade 6 & 7 (See Homework Policy for particular Homework suggestions and timing). This helps to develop self-discipline and the ability to work independently; it also reinforces, extends and enriches the work completed in the classroom.
- 5.2.4. Children benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities such as Drama, Embroidery, Chess, Hobbies and Crafts, Gardening and so on.
- 5.2.5. Children have the option of learning particular musical instruments and to take part in the School Choir.
- 5.2.6. Special events such as plays, poetry recitals and a sports day are organized during the year and selected days are chosen for celebrations, e.g. World Book Day, Heritage Day etc.
- 5.2.7. Children are taken on two school excursions per term which broadens their learning in particular subject areas.
- 5.2.8. A special excursion in their Grade 6 & 7 year is the annual School Camp in which the children spend two nights away at a camp centre and enjoy a special camp programme involving teamwork and other outdoor activities.

6. Distinctive Teaching methodologies

Our curriculum is underpinned by Charlotte Mason's guiding principles that 'Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life', and it is characterised by certain distinctive methodologies:

6.1. Living books

- 6.1.1. We prefer pupils to study whole books rather than annotated versions, because we want children to develop the intellectual patience to engage with a sustained argument or narrative, to be capable of deeper reflection and analysis.

6.2. Knowledge-rich curriculum

- 6.2.1. Our assumption is that developing an interest in all major areas of knowledge and facets of the human experience is intrinsically enriching.
- 6.2.2. We believe that a child should be exposed to excellence in many forms, for example through music and art appreciation. Our children study the life and works of one composer and one artist each term and also work through one Science biography each term.

6.3. Nature Study

- 6.3.1. Each week our children spend time outside exploring the natural world during nature walks.
- 6.3.2. The goals of this time are to build relationships with natural things; to ask questions about what is seen, heard and touched; to build a sense of ownership and stewardship of the earth; and to cultivate an enjoyment and appreciation of the outdoors.
- 6.3.3. Nature Walks are followed by nature sketching/journaling in the class.

6.4. History

- 6.4.1. Each class has a timeline in their classroom which is “populated” with important information studied in a variety of subjects during the year.
- 6.4.2. Each pupil also keeps a book of Centuries from Grade 3 up.
- 6.4.3. In this way pupils develop a chronological knowledge of world events and appreciate how they link up to form the big sweep of history.

6.5. Narration

- 6.5.1. After listening to a short passage of a book, or looking at a painting, the child will recount, in his/her own words, what he/she has heard or observed.
- 6.5.2. We believe that verbal narration has many benefits:
- it encourages children to listen attentively and observe closely by processing information and reproducing it children can store information more easily in their long term memory;
 - it encourages children to develop analytical thinking skills without getting stuck by the physical mechanics of handwriting;
 - it teaches children to express themselves clearly;
 - more ground can be covered because pupils can show what they know more quickly than if they were required to write it down.

6.5.3. As children progress through school, they also produce an increasing number of written narrations. This teaching method is widely used in Grade 4-7 where a narrative 'Living Book' is used, for example in Composer Study, Picture Study, History, Geography and Science Biographies.

6.6. Dictation

6.6.1. In the Foundation Phase we use dictation regularly to reinforce spelling and grammar concepts, and improve note-taking skills and concentration. It is also a useful evaluative tool for the teacher to assess a pupil's language level.

6.7. Independent research projects

6.7.1. These are designed to create opportunities for self-directed learning.

6.7.2. All pupils in Grade 6&7 learn research skills that are applied in a research project of choice tied to either their History, Geography or Science curriculum.

6.8. Championing books over screens

6.8.1. We deliberately prioritise books over computers because we believe it is a higher order skill to possess the intellectual patience to read a whole book. A key goal for our pupils is that they should feel at home in the world of books.

6.8.2. This preference for books means that we do not make extensive use of computers in class in Grades 1-4.

6.8.3. Our approach to computer literacy for Grades 5-7 is as follows:

- Weekly keyboard and typing skills practice
- Internet based research as part of homework
- Presenting orals or presentations by means of Google Slides
- Using Google Classroom to access and submit homework tasks

7. Curriculum planning

7.1. Long term planning

7.1.1. Curriculum Planning Schedules have been drawn up for each year group in each subject to ensure progression. They are stored on Google Drive in the Curriculum folders and they are updated annually.

7.1.2. The Planning Schedules give an overview of the length, objectives, key vocabulary, and assessment strategies for each unit of study. They detail the main activities and key resources deployed in each unit of work and supply sufficient detail to enable other teachers to pick up the programme of study at short notice.

7.1.3. These might include prior knowledge or help about topics to be covered, scaffolding and enabling questions, or a different set of resources, levels of support or expected outcomes.

7.2. Short term planning

- 7.2.1. Teachers have a responsibility to maintain up-to-date plans for each unit of work, and must be able to provide evidence of weekly and daily lesson planning.
- 7.2.2. This short term planning is saved in the Weekly Planner folder on Google Drive.
- 7.2.3. Lesson plans must include a basic explanation of the work to be covered, necessary resources and strategies for differentiation.

8. Curriculum Delivery for Special Needs

- 8.1. As a general rule, Grace Primary expects that its pupils will be able to access mainstream classroom teaching without the need for significant 1-1 support. With active support from parents, including a willingness on their part to pay for 1-1 work if necessary, we can serve some children with specific special needs.
- 8.2. See Learning Support Policy for more detail.
- 8.3. We recognise that the more able also can be considered to have a 'special need'. Our rich curriculum is intended to aim high, and therefore to stimulate and stretch the most able. The content of the curriculum itself, plus effective differentiation, are used to extend the more able. Additional opportunities arise, such as being involved in the delivery of assemblies or participating in Eisteddfods.

9. Monitoring, evaluation and review

- 9.1. The teaching and learning provision at Grace Primary School is monitored by the Principal and the Senior Leadership Team.
- 9.2. Information about the quality of teaching and learning is gathered through a system of focused observations, book scrutinies and staff appraisals.
- 9.3. We look at short and long term plans, track pupil progress and analyse exam results against baseline assessments. This information is used to inform planning and thus continually improve provision.