Curriculum Guidelines at Abbey Village Primary
A progression model for mixed age classes

These guidelines refer to the teaching of: Science, Computing, History, Geography, Design Technology, Art and Design, Music and Modern Foreign Language.

The overview of the curriculum is split into three areas: Knowledge, Skills, Characteristics of effective learning.

Knowledge:

Since 2010, education reforms have been driven by the idea that the transmission of rich subject knowledge should be the priority for schools. The thinking behind this approach goes back decades. In the late 1970s, an American literary analyst and professor, E. D. Hirsch, made a discovery.

Hirsch wrote that 'knowledge should be thought of as mental Velcro'. People who have lots of subject-specific knowledge find that new knowledge 'sticks' to it, helping them commit the new information to long-term memory. In the same vein, a lack of subject-specific knowledge can mean that new concepts slip past you or that you make mistakes.

In her landmark book, '7 Myths About Education', Daisy Christodoulou deconstructs the myth that the way to develop pupil expertise in subjects like science or history is to teach them to think like expert scientists or expert historians. She writes, "The difference between experts and novices is that experts have a huge body of background knowledge and processes stored in long-term memory, and that they have spent a huge amount of time practising using that knowledge and those processes. In most fields, it takes several years and thousands of hours to become an expert."

(Information from: The importance of a knowledge-rich curriculum-Nick Gibb addresses a Social Market Foundation panel event on raising school standards-Published 21 July 2021)

<u>What does this mean for Abbey Village?</u>
With mixed age classes the knowledge can be similar for different year groups, for example, children in KS2 will learn about Ancient Greece once during their time at Abbey Village but some children will meet this topic in year 4 whilst others may meet it in year 6. The difference in how they meet it is laid out in the table below.

Knowledge			
	Finding and seeking	**Storing and remembering**	**Presenting and sharing**
Early years	Children explore the environments in areas of their own interests. Adults observe and adapt the environments to increase engagement and to further development. Objective led planning is used to ensure the whole EYFS curriculum is covered. Through observations and discussions with children, adults can find out what children know, remember and can do. The environment is planned after careful assessment to ensure that it promotes progress for the current cohort - the assessment is a gap strength analysis - the environment is adapted to ensure that any weaker areas are developed and strengths are challenged. For all areas of provision there is a common play behaviours plan linked to resources, these are changed and adapted to ensure children who are engaged through provocations are also working at an appropriate skill level to ensure they feel challenged and develop as resilient learners acquiring new knowledge and skills.		
KS1	Children will be provided with opportunities to practice and consolidate their knowledge through 'Brain Builders' challenges that will be planned by the teacher to ensure they are accessible. They will be encouraged to complete these independently and given the opportunity to take their learning further.		Children will be challenged to present their learning in different ways e.g. a video, a lap-book, posters, leaflets and art. The learning will be shared with their peers and parents.

LKS2	Children will work individually, in pairs and groups researching similar areas. They will be offered guidance in their online research as they begin to understand popular search engines and will be provided with a range of books around the specific topic. They will also engage with experts and visit places to enhance their knowledge and understanding in specific areas of the curriculum.	Children will create records of what they have learnt as individuals, pairs and groups and will work with a teacher on the best way to store their knowledge.	Each unit of study begins with an enquiry question e.g. How will 5 a day keep me healthy? Children will respond to the initial enquiry at the end of each unit. Children will have a limited choice of how this can be presented. Children will present what they know and understand about a topic through our 'Brain Builders' challenges. Children will be challenged to present the information to others in a format of their choice e.g. model, multimedia presentation, scrapbook, information leaflet. The learning will be shared with their peers and parents.
UKS2	Children seek their own knowledge, choosing books from a selection and using online research which they are guided to evaluate effectively. They will also engage with experts and visits to enhance their knowledge and understanding of specific subject areas. School aim to involve the children in planning these visits.	Children will have to consider how to save and retrieve the knowledge from a range of suggestions (which they can add to) - this may be notes, mind maps, photographs, bookmarks, etc - they will need to evaluate the effectiveness of the chosen methods.	Each unit of study begins with an enquiry question e.g what if there were no rainforests? Children will respond to the initial enquiry at the end of each unit and they will have a wide choice of how this can be presented. Children will present what they know and understand about a topic through our 'Brain Builders' challenges. Children will be challenged to present their knowledge in different ways - they must present different topics in different ways. The learning will be shared with their peers and parents.

Skills:

Whilst the knowledge within a topic may be similar for the older and younger children within a mixed age class, the skill expectations will vary depending on the age of the children. For some subjects this may mean some children in the same class are doing very different things e.g in skill based subjects such as Design and Technology:

Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Skill Progression - Making		
• Prepare pattern pieces as templates for their design • Select from techniques for different parts of the process.	• Develop one idea in depth. • Select and use a wide range of tools. • Cut accurately and safely to a marked line. • Select from and use a wide range of materials.	• Make prototypes. • Use researched information to inform decisions. • Produce detailed lists of ingredients/components/materials and tools. • Refine their products – review-rework and improve.

In more knowledge based subjects such as History the topic material may be similar but the skill level will vary. The progression in skills developments are set out for each subject and can be viewed on the subject pages of our school website.

Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Skill Progression - Chronology		
• place the time studied on a timeline. • sequence events or artefacts use dates related to the passing of time • place events from period studied on a timeline • use terms related to the period and begin to date events understand more complex terms e.g. BCE/AD	• Place current study on time line in relation to other studies. • know and sequence key events of time studied use relevant terms and periods/ labels • relate current studies to previous studies	• Place current study on time line in relation to other studies. • sequence up to ten events on a time line • know and sequence key events of time studied use relevant terms and periods/ labels • relate current studies to previous studies • make comparisons between different times in history

Characteristics of effective learning:

In the early years the characteristics are a core part of the curriculum that are observed, planned for and encouraged but they are no longer explicit as children move into the National Curriculum. As a school we noted the amazing level of independence, engagement in learning and motivation in Early Years but found children moving into KS2 did not show these high levels of independence and resilience. The core difference in how teachers work was more adult led than child led as the children move through the school. Our concern was how to keep building on the excellent practice in early years but beginning to push children further outside of what they already know to ensure they cover the National Curriculum and take their learning further than they ever thought they could.

As part of our research, we looked at the characteristics of learning and how these could mature with the children. We discussed what we wanted for the children who leave Abbey Village and move onto secondary school. We certainly knew we didn't want a class of passive learners or conformists. We wanted children who aren't scared to question and think for themselves, to stand up for others, to take their learning further, to overcome challenges and to be the change they want to see in the world.

With the children and our governors, we developed 8 key learning values that build on the characteristics and they underpin everything we do at Abbey Village.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning		
Playing and exploring Is about finding out and exploring, playing with what they know and being willing to 'have a go'.	**Active Learning** Is about being involved and concentrating, persevering and enjoying achieving, what they set out to do.	**Creating and thinking critically** Is about having their own ideas, making links and choosing ways to do things

8 key learning values

Don't give up	Try new things	Respect others	Concentrate	Be motivated	Improve	Imagine	Push yourself