



Thematic Approaches to Learning (TAL) Policy

Written	October 2019
Date of review	October 2021
SLT Lead	Charlotte Roberts
Signed: Head Teacher	_____
Chair of IEB	_____

Thematic Approaches to Learning (TAL) Policy

Our KS3 curriculum comprises a thematic, cyclical approach to the curriculum to support the development of each student's basic skills, knowledge and understanding, whilst delivering the relevant National Curriculum requirements. This ensures a broad and varied curriculum that remains interesting and stimulating for all students.

Each term the class groups work around an agreed topic and cover four subject areas from the following list:

1. Geography

'Geography is a subject that holds the key to our future.'

Michael Palin (English comedian, actor, writer and television presenter)

Geography is a varied subject which explores the relationship between the Earth and the people who inhabit it. This subject engages imagination, curiosity and encourages consideration. We aim to build students' geographical understanding by introducing and reinforcing key skills and knowledge of the world, whilst continuing to develop an interest and passion for global knowledge.

2. History

'There is nothing in the new world except the history you do not know.'

Harry S. Truman (33rd President of the United States)

History is about developing an awareness of the past, through teaching about people, key events and important changes. We aim to develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of local, British and world history that will, in turn, develop an understanding of what life was like in the past and gain a better understanding of the world today and our place within it.

3. Science

'Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.'

Marie Curie (the first woman to be awarded a Nobel Prize for her contribution to physics – she was also awarded the Nobel Prize for chemistry)

Science is an essential subject in encouraging our students to learn about and from the world around them. We aim to develop students' use of scientific vocabulary and ability to work scientifically including opportunities to make and record observations and measurements using a range of methods for different investigations both within the classroom and outside doing field work inquiries.

4. Art and Design

'Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.'

Pablo Picasso (a Spanish painter, sculptor, printmaker, ceramicist, stage designer, poet and playwright)

Our art and design curriculum is intended to encourage students to be creative and inventive. We recognise the importance of creativity in forming well rounded and interesting individuals who will enjoy learning about the work of art and design. We aim for our art and design curriculum to be stimulating, varied and interesting in order to encourage students to be confident in their own designs and creations.

5. Religious Education

'This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness.'
Dalai Lama (Spiritual leader of the Tibetan people)

Religious Education is an essential element of our school's curriculum. The delivery of our meaningful Religious Education programme gives students opportunities to establish an understanding of their place in the world, encourage them to question core ethical beliefs and to develop tolerance and understanding of different faiths, cultures and world views. Topics studied contribute to students' personal fulfilment and development of themselves as active and responsible citizens.

6. Design and Technology

'You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.'
Maya Angelou (author, poet, civil rights activist)

We believe that an inspiring and useful design and technology curriculum prompts students to use their creative minds to design and build using a range of materials and processes. Our design and technology curriculum is weighted heavily towards cooking and nutrition however we also incorporate woodwork, graphics and sculpture into the programme.

7. Music

'Be your own artist, and always be confident in what you're doing. If you're not going to be confident, you might as well not be doing it.'

Aretha Franklin (American singer, songwriter, pianist and civil rights activist)

An appreciation of great works of music is fundamental. Our music curriculum is designed to give students the opportunity to listen to, appreciate and evaluate great composers and their works. We believe that an appreciation of music leads to and encourages students' own creative and performance skills. Students are also given the opportunity to learn about a musical instrument and to be supported in composing their own music.

Topics within the 3-yr cycle

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Animal Kingdom How can humans and animals live in harmony?	Britain What makes Britain great?	Africa What is significant about Africa?
Medieval Britain How did the medieval age shape modern Britain?	Winter What is significant about winter?	The Pre-historic World What came before us?
Oxford What makes Oxford famous?	Space What do we know about space?	Cities What is it like to live in a city?
Crime and Punishment How has crime and punishment changed over time?	Oceans and Rivers How are our oceans and rivers changing?	Superpowers What impact did WW2 have on international relationships?
Japan How has Japan influenced culture?	Diversity and Equality How do we celebrate diversity?	Climate Change How does climate change affect our weather?
Festivals How are festivals celebrated around the world?	Sport What is the Olympic dream?	British Empire How did the British Empire shape the modern world?

Aims and objectives

Our TAL curriculum encourages students to

- acquire a passion for geographical and historical knowledge, understanding and skills,
- develop students' understanding of basic subject specific vocabulary within the each of the subjects,
- develop a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people, gaining a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain's past and that of the wider world,
- develop an increased sense of identity through learning about Great Britain and its relationship with other countries as well as local studies,
- gain knowledge and understanding about diverse places, people, resources and natural and human environments,
- develop an informed concern about the quality of the environment and the future of the human habitat,
- develop a chronological framework for their knowledge about significant events and people,
- increase proficiency and confidence to ask relevant questions, think critically, weigh evidence, consider arguments and develop perspective and judgement,
- deepen their scientific knowledge, skills and understanding in order to better understand the world around them,
- enhance their imagination through creating pieces of work in design and technology, art and music,
- understand more about the past and develop an understanding of the way of life and cultures of different people in different times and societies.

Teaching of TAL

Our schemes of learning are produced by experienced class teachers on a shared and rotational basis to ensure variety. Medium term plans are then adapted by each individual class teacher to ensure the needs of each learner are met within lessons. In lessons, a variety of approaches are used to ensure continuity and progression. Lessons will include whole class teaching, group work and individual work. Planning is comprehensively supported by using a wide range of differentiated resources with an emphasis on providing hands on experiences for the students, including loaning artefacts and organising off-site visits to the wealth of local museums. Fieldwork is also carried out within the school grounds and around the local area when appropriate. Please see each individual subject sheet for further information about each of the TAL subjects.