

Marlborough School



Curriculum Design Statement Intent, implementation, impact

Intent

The breadth of our curriculum is designed with three goals in mind:

- 1) To give pupils appropriate experiences to develop as confident, responsible citizens;
- 2) To provide a rich 'cultural capital';
- 3) To provide a coherent, structured, academic curriculum that leads to sustained mastery for all and a greater depth of understanding for those who are capable.

1. Appropriate experiences

We have developed three **curriculum drivers** that shape our curriculum, bring about the aims and values of our school, and to respond to the particular needs of our community:

Community – pupils learn to be an active, responsible member of our school, the locality, our country and the world.

Environment – pupils learn to respect and appreciate the environment, understanding their future role and responsibility in saving the planet.

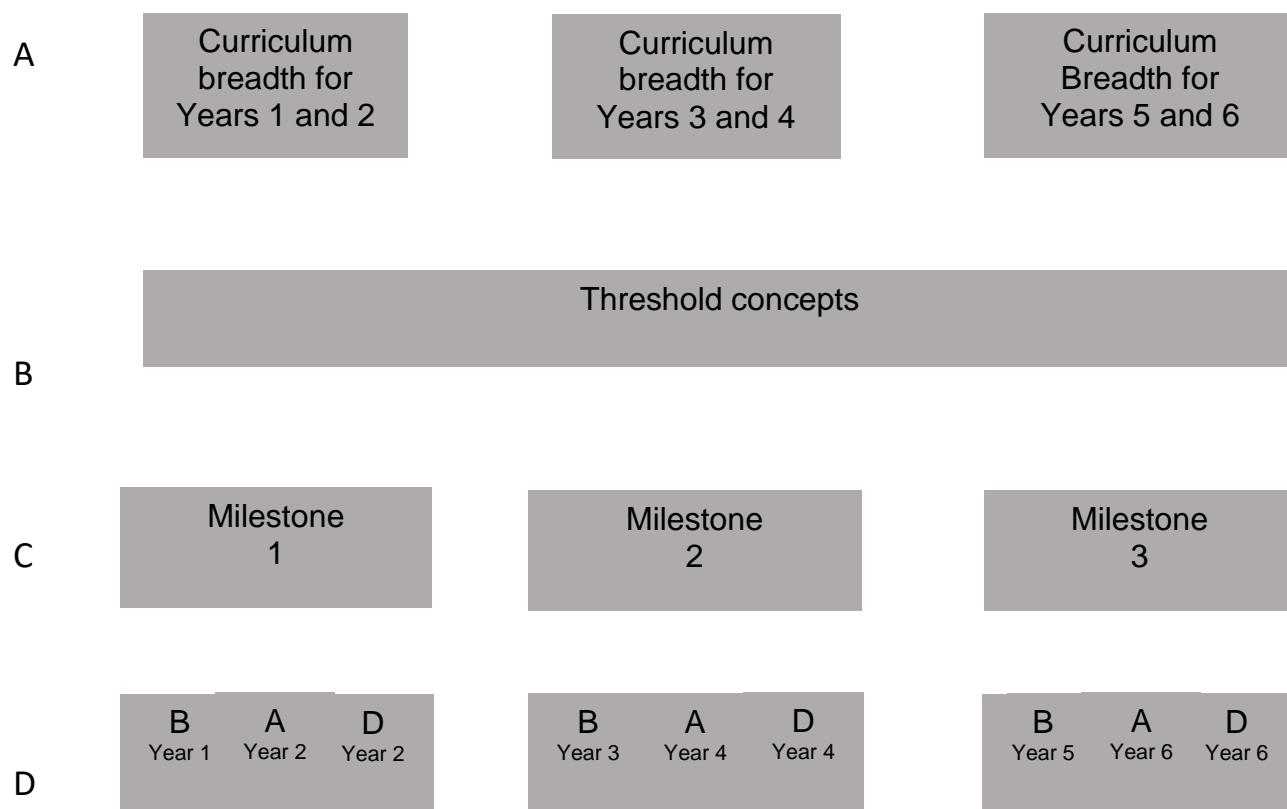
The Arts – pupils learn to creatively express themselves through exploration of music, art, drama and dance.

2. Cultural capital

Cultural capital is the background knowledge of the world pupils need to infer meaning from what they read. It includes vocabulary which, in turn, helps pupils to express themselves in a sophisticated, mature way.

3. A coherently planned academic curriculum underpinned by the three drivers, our academic curriculum sets out:
 - a) a clear list of the breadth of topics that will be covered;
 - b) the 'threshold concepts' pupils should understand;
 - c) criteria for progression within the threshold. Concepts; (milestones)
 - d) criteria for depth of understanding.

The diagram below shows a model of our curriculum structure:



- A The **curriculum breadth** for each year group ensures each teacher has clarity as to what to cover. As well as providing the key knowledge within subjects it also provides for pupils' growing cultural capital.
- B **Threshold concepts** are the key disciplinary aspects of each subject. They are chosen to build conceptual understanding within subjects and are repeated many times in each topic.
- C **Milestones** define the standards for the threshold concepts.
- D **Depth:** we expect pupils in year 1 of the milestone to develop a **Basic (B)** understanding of the concepts and an **Advancing (A)** or **Deep (D)** understanding in Year 2 of the milestone. Phase one (Years 1, 3 and 5) in a Milestone is the knowledge building phase that provides the fundamental foundations for later application. LEARNING AT THIS STAGE MUST NOT BE RUSHED and will involve a high degree of repetition so that knowledge enters pupils' long-term memory. If all of the core knowledge is acquired quickly, teachers create extended knowledge.

Sustained mastery

Nothing is learned unless it rests in pupils' long-term memories. This does not happen, and cannot be assessed, in the short term. Assessment, therefore answers two main questions: 'How well are pupils coping with curriculum content?' and 'How well are they retaining previously taught content?'

Implementation

Our curriculum design is based on evidence from cognitive science; three main principles underpin it:

- 1) Learning is most effective with **spaced repetition**.
- 2) **Interleaving** helps pupils to discriminate between topics and aids long-term retention.
- 3) **Retrieval** of previously learned content is frequent and regular, which increases both storage and retrieval strength.

In addition to the three principles we also understand that learning is invisible in the short-term and that sustained mastery takes time.

Some of our content is subject specific, whilst other content is combined in a cross-curricular approach. Continuous provision, in the form of daily routines, replaces the teaching of some aspects of the curriculum and, in other cases, provides retrieval practise for previously learned content.

Impact

The impact of our curriculum is that by the end of each Milestone, the vast majority of pupils have sustained mastery of the content, that is, they remember it all and are fluent in it; Some pupils have a greater depth of understanding. We track carefully to ensure pupils are on track to reach the expectations of our curriculum.